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PLUCK AND LUCK

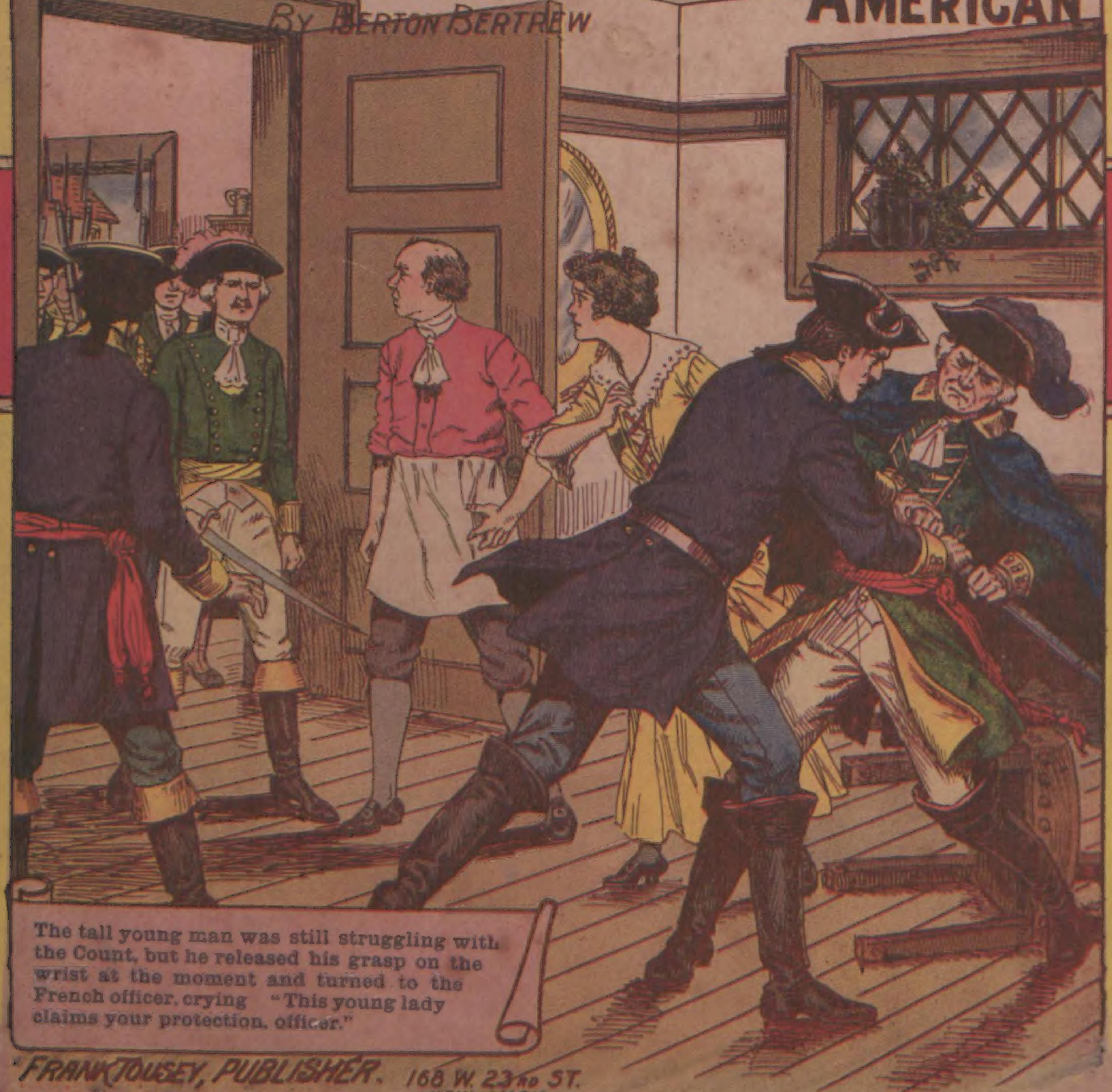
CAPTAIN COLUMBIA

OR THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG

AND OTHER STORIES

By MERTON BERTREW

AMERICAN



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PLUCK AND LUCK

Stories of Adventure

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CAPTAIN COLUMBIA

—OR—

The Wonderful Adventures of a Young American

By BERTON BERTREW

CHAPTER I.

THE ESCAPED PRISONERS.

One evening in the month of May in the first year of the present century, two young men in torn and dripping garments staggered along one of the lower streets in the Italian city of Genoa, which is celebrated as the birthplace of Columbus.

It was quite dark at the time, and very few of the inhabitants were abroad in the lonely street.

The few Italians who did happen to encounter the dripping strangers stared at them in some amazement and then passed on, muttering:

"Spies from the English fleet. The French will soon take care of them."

One of the young men, who was the taller of the two, was supporting the other in his arm, and when a light appeared in a window at a distance he said to his companion in cheerful tones:

"Bear up now, my friend, as here is a wine-shop ahead, and we will soon get something to nourish us."

The speaker had a soldierly bearing, notwithstanding the condition of his garments, and his voice sounded clear and strong.

"I am all right now, captain," replied the younger man, who shook himself as if making an effort, "and I have got my breath after that long swim. Thank fortune we are out of the hands of the enemy and with our old friends, even if we are in a besieged city."

They reached the wine-shop as the younger man was speaking, and his tall friend pushed boldly in as he said in subdued tones:

"Let me do the talking in here."

The man addressed as "captain" by his friend flung himself on a chair in the small wine-shop and pointed to the other to do likewise, as he addressed a swarthy-looking Italian behind the counter, saying:

"A bottle of your best wine and some bread and sausage, if you please, sir."

The Italian stared at the speaker's wet garments in an impudent manner and then shrugged his shoulders as he grumbled forth:

"I would like to see your money first."

The tall stranger sprang up on the instant, and drew a piece of gold from his pocket and flung it on the counter, as he cried:

"There's money, you insolent boor. Do you take us for beggars because we have just escaped from an English ship out in the bay?"

The swarthy Italian was all smiles on the instant, and he hastened to serve his guests, as he cried in apologetic tones:

"I crave your pardon, gentlemen, as I feared that you were English spies."

Resuming his seat, the tall stranger laughed merrily, as he rejoined:

"I suppose we are suspicious-looking characters, but we are able to give a good report of ourselves. How goes on the siege?"

Shrugging his shoulders again, the Italian replied with a fierce gesture:

"The tyrant Austrians are beating at the walls with their guns, and the English ships thunder from outside, but General Massena and his Frenchmen defy them bravely day by day."

"Can the French general hold out?" asked the tall stranger, with an approving glance at his friend.

"He will hold out until Napoleon comes to his aid," answered the Italian.

"Is Napoleon in Italy, then?"

The Italian cast a suspicious glance at the strangers and then turned away to make change, as he grumbled forth:

"I cannot answer such questions. If you are friends of France and Italy you can seek information at the proper quarter."

At that moment a tall, powerful man of middle age and wearing a large cloak, the cape of which was held over his face, entered the place from the street and nodded to the wine seller as he passed into a back room.

The tall stranger also cast one or two suspicious glances at the young men which the taller of them returned with interest, as he muttered to himself:

"I think I will know you again if I should happen to meet you, and I have an idea that we have met before, although I couldn't get a good glimpse at your face."

The wine seller followed the man with the cloak into the back room, forgetting in the meantime to give the change to his guest.

While the two young men were refreshing themselves with the bread and wine, loud voices were heard in the inner room, and then the clear, musical tones of a woman were raised aloud, as she exclaimed:

"Count Claude, I will not go forth with you. I prefer to die first."

A subdued voice was then heard, saying:

"Do not speak so loud, dear lady, as there are strangers outside."

"I do not care. Why did you dare to bring me to this place with a false tale? I will go forth at once and place myself under the protection of the French general."

"You must not, lady."

The young strangers could then hear the sounds of a scuffle in the inner room, while the voice of the female rang out in exciting tones, crying:

"Touch me not, you wretch, as I will claim the protection of the French. Mercy! help!"

The cry of distress was scarcely uttered when the tall young stranger sprang from the table and dashed toward the inner room, followed by his younger companion.

On bursting in the door leading to the inner room, they saw a beautiful young lady struggling in the grasp of the tall man with the cloak, who was endeavoring to stifle her cries by placing his hand on her mouth.

Without a moment's hesitation the foremost of the dripping strangers seized the cloaked man and hurled him aside as he cried:

"Hands off the young lady, Count Claude, as I will protect her whoever she may be."

The young girl uttered a cry of joy as she sprang behind the two strangers, exclaiming:

"Save me from him and I will bless you."

The man with the cloak drew back and attempted to draw his sword, but the tall young stranger closed with him on the instant and seized him by the wrist as he cried in indignant tones:

"I am unarmed, as you can see, Count Claude, but I am your match for all that."

The swarthy landlord was about to interfere when a heavy tramping was heard in the outer room, and then a commanding voice rang out, crying:

"What disturbance is this?"

The two young strangers turned their eyes in the direction on the instant, when they saw a French officer with his drawn sword at the head of a file of men.

The tall young man was still struggling with the count, but he released his grasp on the wrist at the moment and turned on the French officer, crying:

"This young lady claims your protection, officer, and I have a request to make of you also."

The young French officer stared suspiciously at the young speaker and his friend, and then demanded, in severe tones:

"Who are you, sir?"

"I am an unfortunate French officer who has lately escaped from an English man-of-war with my young friend here."

"If that is the case why did you not report to the guard at once?"

"Because we were fainting with exertion after our long swim, and we were compelled to seek nourishment here."

"What is your name and title, sir?"

The young stranger reflected a moment before he replied, in dignified tones:

"I decline to answer any other questions at present, and I beg you will lead me before General Massena as soon as possible."

The escaped prisoner then turned his eye on the beautiful young lady, as he continued:

"This young lady would also seek the protection of your general, officer."

The young French officer cast an admiring glance on the beautiful young woman, who was arrayed in very rich garments, and whose black eyes were flashing with excitement, as he inquired:

"Do you seek an interview with General Massena, young lady?"

"Yes, yes. That person there—Where has Count Claude gone?"

Her late protector stared around the room also, when he noticed that the count had suddenly disappeared while he was speaking to the French officer.

Turning to the wine seller, the tall young stranger demanded:

"Where is Count Claude?"

Shrugging his shoulders the man stared out toward the street door, as he replied:

The young French officer then bowed to the young lady, as he said:

"I would be pleased to escort you to General Massena, and you will come with us, gentlemen."

"With pleasure," replied the young lady, as she moved toward the door.

The two young strangers saw that they were to be treated as prisoners, but they both smiled when they found themselves surrounded by the guards, while the taller one remarked:

"It would be agreeable to get a change of clothing before appearing in the presence of the general, but you must do your duty, officer."

The French officer bowed also, as he civilly replied:

"It will afford me great pleasure to supply you with a change of clothing when you can prove that you are not English spies, gentlemen."

They were soon marching up along the street, the young French officer walking beside the beautiful young lady, whom he endeavored to draw into conversation.

The young girl declined all advances, however, as she simply said:

"I will explain who I am to your general, and I thank you for your kindness, officer."

General Massena was a rough but intrepid soldier of the French revolution, but he was quartered in one of the grandest palaces in the besieged city, where the outward luxuries were not in keeping with the scanty fare which the officers and men alike were compelled to accept at the time.

The young lady was the first to be admitted into the presence of the famous general who was upholding the honor of France in Italy at that time and the interview was a very long one.

The two strangers were at length admitted into the presence of the French general, who received them with penetrating glances from his dark, flashing eyes.

Addressing the taller man, the French general at once said:

"I understand that you have escaped from an English man-of-war out in the bay, gentlemen?"

"That is the truth, general," answered the older man. "We were returning from Egypt on board of a French transport, when we were captured by an English vessel, and we have been kept as prisoners on her ever since."

The conversation was carried on in French, and Massena fixed his keen eyes on the speaker again as he remarked:

"Were you serving in the French army, as I see that you speak with a foreign accent?"

"We both served under General Bonaparte, but we are natives of America, general," answered the tall young man, with a proud smile.

As he spoke he took from his breast a small package of oil silk, from which he drew a paper, and presented it to the French general, as he remarked:

"There is my commission as captain of the French army, and I will vouch that my friend and countryman here was a volunteer with me in Egypt."

General Massena took the document and commenced to read it carefully, when he suddenly started and stared at the tall young man, as he eagerly inquired:

"Is it possible that you are the famous Captain Columbia who distinguished himself in such a gallant manner at the battle of Aboukir, and in other engagements in that great campaign?"

The young American bowed and smiled, as he replied, in modest tones:

"I have the honor to be the person mentioned in that document, and I can assure you that my friend here, Mr. David Peterson, gained as much honor as I did on the plains of Egypt."

While he was thus speaking a tall young French officer entered the apartment, and Captain Columbia had scarcely completed the sentence when the newcomer sprang forward and grasped his hand, crying:

"My dear Captain Columbia, I am rejoiced to see you. And is it possible that you are one of those who has just escaped from the English man-of-war?"

Captain Columbia grasped the hand of his friend in turn as he replied with a joyous smile:

"I am delighted to see you also, Colonel Lenard, not only for your own sake, but because it will not be now necessary for me to offer further proofs to our brave general here."

General Massena advanced on the instant and grasped Captain Columbia by the hand as he responded, saying:

"I would not require further proofs, brave captain, as I pretend to be a judge of faces, and I would not have to look very deeply to see truth written on yours."

The general then turned to David Peterson and grasped his hand also, as he said:

"You are welcome to Genoa, sir, and I congratulate you on your escape from the English ship, but I regret that we cannot offer you a better reception, as the Austrians outside will not let our Italian friends send us in any of the luxuries of life."

The young American smiled, as he replied:

"Brave general, we are only too glad to get out of the enemy's power, and we are prepared to take a soldier's fare and strike with you for the defense of this beautiful city."

"Bravely spoken!" cried the French general. "Now, we must see to your getting a change of clothing and proper refreshments, when I have a proposition to make to you, brave Captain Columbia."

"I will be at your service, general."

General Massena then drew Colonel Lenard aside and gave him some orders in subdued tones.

The escaped prisoners were then led away by the friendly

colonel, and when they had left the room Massena pressed his hand to his brow and pondered some moments ere he muttered aloud:

"That is the very man for the mission if he will but accept it, as I am certain he will. He has the name of being one of the harvest in that brave army of Egypt, and his face tells me that he possesses a rare combination of talents suited for the daring enterprise. When he has eaten and changed his clothing I will speak to him on the subject."

The general then hastened to summon one of his officers, while he continued to mutter aloud:

"Who can this Count Claude be? I must have the fellow arrested at once, as we cannot tolerate traitors or spies in Genoa at present."

When the officer appeared the general gave orders to have the city searched for Count Claude, giving a description of the man at the same time.

While these incidents were transpiring warlike sounds could be heard from the ramparts and the other fortifications thrown up by the French to defend the beautiful city, while the Austrian batteries outside replied with equal vigor.

CHAPTER II.

AN IMPORTANT MISSION.

About an hour after his first arrival in the palace, Captain Columbia appeared before the French general again in a private apartment, when the young American was arrayed in a suit of gay attire which had been specially procured for him by Massena's orders.

The French general smiled as he noticed the gay appearance of the handsome young American, and motioning him to a seat, he remarked:

"I presume you are a little puzzled, captain, at my requesting you to appear in that garb."

The young American smiled in turn, as he laughingly replied:

"In truth, I was a little puzzled, general, but I remember the old proverb about beggars not being choosers, and we were both glad to exchange our wet garments. I can assure you."

Speaking in very subdued tones, General Massena said:

"Did it occur to you that I had an object in requesting you to wear that Italian costume, when we could have supplied you with a French uniform befitting your rank?"

"Some such thought did occur to me, general, to tell you the truth."

"Ha! I see that I have to deal with a keen observer. Well, I will be candid with you, as befits one soldier dealing with another. I had an object in view, and I will hasten to explain it to you."

"I will only say, general," responded the young American, in candid, manly tones, "that I am at your services in whatever way you may seek to command me, knowing full well that the gallant defender of Genoa will never suggest aught that is not honorable."

Massena shrugged his shoulders a little and smiled, as he responded:

"A brave soldier may sometimes be compelled to propose disagreeable duties to the officers under him, and I now find myself in that predicament. Do you understand how we are situated here at present?"

"I can understand that you are defending yourselves against the Austrians and English in such a manner as to render your name famous in the annals of war."

"We are but doing our duty to our country. It is on that subject that I now wish to speak to you. It is true that the Austrians are pressing us very closely, and that the English fleet assail us with great vigor from the bay, as well as cut off all our communications by sea. Our enemies hope to take Genoa very soon, but I feel confident that we can baffle them yet."

"Do you look for succor from General Bonaparte?" inquired the young American.

"That is the very subject on which I wish to consult with you, Captain Columbia. By the way, your name is suggestive at present."

A pleasant smile appeared on the face of the young American soldier and he responded in candid tones:

"I will frankly confess, General Massena, that Columbia is not my real name. It is a name I assumed on joining the French republic, suppressing my name for family reasons only."

The honest French soldier at once responded, saying:

"I assure you, brave captain, that I do not seek to pry into your private affairs. It is enough for me to know that

you are an American, and that you have fought for the French republic. Whatever our enemies may say of us, Americans will know that we are fighting for the rights of mankind, as our fathers before us struck against the English when you were struggling against them for your independence."

The young American smiled in a happy manner as he responded:

"I remember the services of Lafayette and his brave friends when I enlisted under General Bonaparte, and I certainly believe that I am striking in the cause of freedom when I fight with the French."

A peculiar smile played on Massena's face as he remarked:

"Perhaps you are not aware that Napoleon Bonaparte, who is now first consul of France, is leading an army over the Alps to attack the Austrian army in Italy?"

"I was not aware of that, general. Is it possible that the conqueror of Egypt is trying to rival Hannibal by leading another army over those snow-clad mountains?"

"It is the truth, Captain Columbia. Our great general is attempting that tremendous feat at the present time, and he is certain to succeed, as he has never yet encountered defeat. One of his objects is to send me help, and drive the Austrians from before Genoa. I wish to send him word as to our situation here."

"Then you desire assistance from General Bonaparte as soon as possible?"

"On the contrary, I desire to inform General Bonaparte that I can hold out here as long as he proposes, and that he can use his full force against the Austrians massing in Italy near the foot of the Alps. In plain words, I desire to have the honor of holding Genoa with my present force, and I need a brave and competent messenger who will hasten to inform General Bonaparte that such is my request. Will you accept that mission, Captain Columbia?"

"With pleasure, general, on one condition."

"What is that condition?"

"That you will permit my companion to accompany me. We are sworn friends; we have lived and fought together, and we are pledged to share each other's fortunes for good or ill through life."

"What do you say if I offer you another companion also?"

"Who may that be, general?"

"You noticed the young lady who was assailed in the wine-shop?"

"I should say I did notice the young lady."

Massena shook his head as he replied:

"I can only tell you at present that she is known as Christine Ballou, that she is of French and Italian parentage, that she is very wealthy and highly connected, and that she is most anxious to leave Genoa, where she is in great danger at present, and hasten to France as soon as possible at all hazards. Will you volunteer to escort the young lady on the perilous journey?"

"With intense pleasure, general," was the eager reply; "but does the lady realize the great dangers she will have to encounter, not only in passing out of this besieged city, but also in passing with us through a country now infested by the Austrian enemies?"

"Christine Ballou realizes the difficulties before her, but she is eager and willing to face them, as her life is threatened here by secret enemies," answered the French general.

"Is the man whom she addressed as Count Claude one of her enemies?"

"He is, and I may say that he is her principal enemy. We are seeking the wretch at present, but I fear that we will not succeed in finding him, as he has resided in this city, and he has means of concealment here."

"Who and what is he, general?"

"He is an Italian nobleman of some means, and I believe that he acts as a spy for the Austrians, as it is certain that he enters and leaves the city at will. He has offered to take the young lady secretly from hence through the Austrian lines, but she declined his escort, fearing treachery on his part."

"But will it be possible for us to pass out through the Austrian lines with that young lady as our companion?"

"The young lady will assume a disguise as well as yourselves. It will be difficult, of course, but brave men with your experience can accomplish much. It is all-important that General Bonaparte should hear from me at this important crisis, and the young lady declares that she will leave the city if she has to venture forth alone."

"Then we will escort her at all hazards and we will defend

her with our lives," said the young American, with great emphasis.

"That is settled then, and it only remains to arrange for your departure. The young lady will remain here in this palace until to-morrow night, when all preparations will be made for the journey. In the meantime, if it is agreeable to you, I will introduce you to your companion for the journey."

"I will be delighted," responded the young American, as he arose to accompany the general.

Captain Columbia was much more delighted when he was introduced to the charming young lady, who thanked him over and over again for his brave action in rescuing her from the clutches of Count Claude in the wine-shop, and for his gallant offer to act as her escort in the perilous journey proposed.

CHAPTER III.

DISGUISED AS A MONK.

Captain Columbia retired from the interview with the young lady delighted at the task proposed to him, while he said to himself:

"When I started out from America with David in search of adventures I had little hope that we would be so successful. We had a great time in Egypt, and ourfeat in swimming from the English vessel was something to be proud of; but it appears that we are destined to outdo our former affairs here in Italy. Can we succeed in bearing the dear young lady safe through the Austrian lines and away to join General Bonaparte at the foot of the Alps? Can that wonderful genius succeed in crossing the great mountains with his army?"

While pondering over the important questions the young American encountered Colonel Lenard, who said to him:

"I am about to make a tour of the ramparts, dear friend, and I would like your company, if you are not too weary, as I desire to speak to you about some of our old friends in Egypt."

"I will go with you with pleasure," was the hearty response, "but I fear that my young friend is fatigued after his long swim."

"Yes, the brave youth has retired to rest, but I knew that you were made of sterner material, as I remember our march across the desert before the battle of Aboukir," responded Colonel Lenard.

While thus conversing about the great campaign in Egypt, the two old comrades passed out of the palace and made their way toward the ramparts of the city.

As they passed along through one of the silent streets a tall monk, with the hood on his cloak drawn over his face, walked by them and proceeded toward the palace.

The two officers paid very little attention to the monk, as men of his order were very numerous in all the Italian cities.

Captain Columbia did not allude to the important mission he had undertaken, as General Massena had requested him to keep silent on the subject, but the two friends spoke about the beautiful young lady who sought refuge in the palace, Captain Lenard saying:

"I saw her once before to-night on the grand parade, and I was then charmed with her appearance. I understand that her father was a French exile of noble descent, who fled here during the terrible days of the first revolution, and that her mother was an Italian countess. It seems that her father dropped his title on coming here, and assumed the name of Ballou, but it has been suggested that she is closely connected with the late royal family in France."

"She is an angel of beauty," replied Captain Columbia, "whether she is a princess or a peasant."

They were approaching the ramparts at the moment, and Captain Columbia could perceive the silent sentinels pacing to and fro, while every now and again the cannon belched forth on the night air as if to show the Austrians outside that the defenders of the city were on the alert.

Suddenly a cry of alarm broke out from the ramparts, followed by a discharge of muskets.

"The foe are on us!" cried Colonel Lenard, as he sprang toward the ramparts, followed by his American friend. "Beat to arms and repel them."

Then out from the ramparts rang a voice, crying:

"They are sealing the walls to the left, and they are in force."

Out from the houses rushed the soldiers, many of them in their night-shirts only, but every man clasped his musket

in his hand, while the gallant officers flourished their swords as they led them to the ramparts, crying:

"Back with the Austrians! We will hold Genoa against all the legions of Europe."

The Austrians were crowding on the ramparts in force, but the active French sprang at them with sword and musket and hurled them back, while they kept shouting their fierce war-cry:

"Long live the Republic, and death to the tyrants of Austria and England!"

When the struggle was over, and just as the brave young American was descending from the ramparts again, a female voice in distress was heard in one of the streets below, crying:

"Help! Mercy! Help!"

Some of the half-dressed soldiers were returning to their quarters at the moment, and Captain Columbia darted down among them, crying:

"From whence comes that voice?"

Then out rang the voice again from up street, but in more subdued tones, as it pleaded forth in supplicating tones:

"In mercy, will no one rescue me?"

Springing in the direction of the voice, and waving a sword the young American cried:

"I will rescue you. By gracious it is the voice of Christine Ballou!"

At that moment the young man caught a glimpse of a monkish figure bearing a young lady in his arms, making in the direction of a large building up the street, from the wall of which a lamp hung suspended.

Captain Columbia was on the other side of the street at the moment, and he dashed in the direction of the monk, as he cried:

"Hold there, father, as that young lady is under my protection."

Several of the half naked soldiers rushed on after the young American, and they had just gained the steps on the opposite side of the street, when the monk suddenly darted into the mansion where the lamp was burning, uttering a defiant cry.

Just before he darted in with his burden the hood fell from his head, and the young American recognized him as Count Claude.

The young girl gave a despairing cry at the same moment, and fell back in the count's arms as if in despair of being rescued.

Before the wretch darted into the mansion with his senseless burden Captain Columbia paused a moment on the steps on the other side of the street, as he yelled forth:

"Once more I call on you to hold up, or I will strike you down with my good sword."

Then it was that the pretended monk dashed into the doorway uttering his defiant cry.

The heavy door closed after them with a bang, and a moment after Captain Columbia was thundering at it with his sword as he yelled aloud:

"Open on the instant, or we will break it down. Count Claude, I recognized you, and I will slay you if you injure that lady."

There was no response to the loud demand, and Captain Columbia then turned to the half-naked soldiers who had followed him, crying:

"Use your muskets with force, and beat down the door here. Here is Colonel Lenard now, and he will uphold me, I am certain."

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER COUNT CLAUDE.

Captain Columbia was so impatient to enter the house into which the man in the garb of a monk had borne the young lady that he flung himself against the strong door with all the force possible, when he kept crying to Colonel Lenard:

"For mercy's sake, get your men to burst in the door at once, as I fear that Miss Ballou is in great danger."

Colonel Lenard then gave some orders to his men, and cried to his friend:

"Stand aside, and we will burst in the door."

Several of the half-naked men struck at the heavy door with their muskets, but it soon became evident that other means would have to be adopted to force it in.

At that moment one of the windows above was opened, and a rough, Italian voice demanded:

"Who knocks there?"

"French soldiers," replied Colonel Lenard. "Open on the instant, or we will blow the house down."

"What do you require?" inquired the voice of the man at the window.

"We require Count Claude and the young lady he bore in here a few minutes ago," answered Captain Columbia, who at once recognized the voice above. "Open, you rascal, or I will run my sword through you! I know you, and you are a creature of the young lady's enemy."

The man in the window was the wine-seller in whose house Captain Columbia and his friend had sought refreshments after escaping from the bay.

"There is no one in here but me," grumbled the man; "but I will open and you can see."

The wine-seller then retired from the window, while Captain Columbia turned to the French officer, saying:

"Did you notice the monkish figure we passed on our way to the ramparts?"

"Yes, I did."

"I am ready to swear that he is the person who bore Miss Ballou in here a few minutes ago, and I am almost certain that he is an Italian known here in Genoa as Count Claude."

"I have heard of the count," replied Colonel Lenard, "and he does not bear a very good character."

Loud cries and shots rang out through the ramparts at the moment, and Colonel Lenard turned to his half-naked soldiers, crying:

"Soldiers, to the ramparts, as the Austrians are on us again."

At that moment the door was flung open and the impetuous soldier rushed in, sword in hand, crying:

"Where are you, you rascal? Count Claude, appear and give an account of yourself to me."

He could hear no reply to his question, and he kept crying aloud as he flew out into the hall again and ran up the broad stairway, sword in hand, and calling even louder than before.

At that moment he could hear the street door close with a slam, and he sprang down into the hallway again, crying:

"The rascals have made off again."

Placing the lamp on the table in the hallway, Captain Columbia hastened to open the door and then rushed out into the street.

He then saw a male figure hastening away in the opposite direction from the ramparts, and he took up the chase, crying:

"Hold up there, you rascal, or I will be the death of you."

He did not succeed in overtaking the fugitive, and turned back and re-entered the house.

Closing the door again and locking it on the inside he placed the key in his pocket, as he said to himself:

"I will take good care that the cunning wretch does not escape in that way with the young lady while I am searching the house."

Seizing the lamp again the young soldier commenced a search of the lower part of the house.

Having searched the lower part of the house with all the haste possible, the brave young soldier flew up the broad stairway again and entered several apartments, still crying aloud:

"Miss Ballou! Miss Ballou! It is a friend who seeks you. Answer me if it is possible, and I will rescue you from that cowardly wretch!"

As he sent forth the last cry Captain Columbia entered an apartment on the second story of the mansion, when he started back with a cry of exultation on perceiving a large cloak lying on an arm-chair.

"It is the garment the wretch wore when he entered here with the young lady."

Having examined the garment for a few moments he flung it down on the chair again, exclaiming:

"Now I am certain that they are concealed somewhere here in the house, and I will find them if I have to cut my way through a dozen Count Claudes."

He then turned to examine the room when he perceived a doorway leading into a dark passage, and he flashed the lamp before him and sent his voice forth again into the gloomy entrance as he cried aloud:

"Miss Ballou, Miss Ballou, it is a friend who calls on you."

A muffled scream was heard in response, coming from some distance in the dark passage, and the brave young soldier held the lamp before him, and with his sword ready for instant action as he dashed in, crying:

"She is here, and I will rescue her at all hazards. I call on you to cry out again, Miss Ballou, as it is Captain Columbia who speaks."

The brave young soldier paused in the dark passage as if waiting for a reply, but not even a whisper came in answer to him.

Pushing on through the dark passage with the lamp before him, he soon struck on a stairway which led down into the next floor.

Rapidly descending the stairs the young man soon came to a small iron door, which he found secured on the other side, and he flung himself against it.

To his great surprise the door gave way before him, and he then perceived some narrow steps leading down into what appeared to be a gloomy vault.

Perfectly reckless of falling into a trap, the young soldier entered the gloomy vault flashing the lamp around him, until he perceived another small passage which appeared to lead cut toward the street, and he sprang into it, crying:

"I will follow on wherever this leads, though a legion of fiends may oppose me."

Pushing on with more caution, the young soldier found that the passage descended very much, and he paused a moment as he said to himself:

"Can it be possible that this passage leads down to the bay, or does it lead out beyond the ramparts? I will push on in any case."

And on he went for some distance, while he could notice that the passage descended lower and lower, until he suddenly struck on solid pieces of masonry which appeared to be the foundation of some large building.

Pausing again the young soldier bent his ear to listen and then a rumbling sound fell on his ear which he could at once comprehend.

"I believe that I am now under the ramparts, and those sounds borne to me are the guns and muskets booming above. There must be an end to this passage not very far beyond, and I will seek the other opening at all hazards."

Shading the lamp a little with his hat, and holding the sword in his mouth, the young American then pushed on, again watching carefully for some opening beyond.

As he proceeded on the booming of the guns came clearer and clearer on his ears, while the passage ascended in proportion as it had fallen before he had reached the point under the rampart.

He had not proceeded a dozen paces before he struck on some rough steps leading upward, and he paused some moments for reflection as he reasoned with himself:

"I must be very cautious now, and not fall into a trap, for the young lady's sake. I will leave the lamp here, and steal up to explore."

Placing the lamp at the bottom of the steps, he commenced to ascend, and he soon found himself at a small iron door, which readily gave way before him.

He then entered what appeared to be the basement of a large building, from whence he could perceive a dim light breaking through the door leading into some apartment above him.

Moving in the direction of the light, Captain Columbia soon struck on a wooden stairway, and on ascending it, he could peer in where the light was burning.

"It is an old church, and it cannot have been used since the siege began. I can now hear voices, and it is Count Claude who speaks."

Captain Columbia peered in the direction from whence the voice came and he saw the tall form of the count standing over a bench on which a female form was reclining.

Then a low, musical voice was heard in reply, as it answered to the threat, saying:

"I may be in your power, Count Claude, but you cannot compel me to be your wife. Will you inform me where we are at present?"

"You are in an old church some distance outside the ramparts, and safe in the Austrians' lines, my dear young lady. I promised to take you safe out of Genoa, and I have kept my promise."

"What does that firing mean?"

"It means that the Austrians are attacking the French on the ramparts again, and that the city will be taken before morning. Place yourself under my protection, and I will guarantee to guide you safely into France as soon as possible."

"Can you not do that without my becoming your wife?" inquired the young lady, with a shudder.

"I cannot."

The young lady sprang up from the bench and cast a scornful glance on the man, as she cried:

"Then I will throw myself on the protection of the Austrian general, and he will not persecute me."

"That would be madness on your part, dear lady, as you would then be treated as a spy. Believe me that your only safety is in placing yourself under my protection, as the Austrians will be in possession of Genoa before morning."

"The Austrians will not take the city, as I can now hear the French cry of triumph, and the battle is dying out."

Count Claude then sprang to one of the side windows and looked out toward the city, as he cried:

"That is true, young lady, but it will not avail you. You are in my power, and the Austrians are my friends. I will now inform you that I am one of their secret agents in Genoa, and I have been giving them the most valuable information."

The count kept gazing out toward the city as he spoke, and he did not see or perceive the figure of the brave young American gliding over toward the bench where the young lady had been reclining.

Advancing silently until he was close behind the traitor, Captain Columbia raised his hand and dealt him a smart blow on the side of the head, as he cried:

"Dog of a traitor, draw and defend yourself, although you do not deserve so much courtesy at the hands of a French soldier."

With a fearful cry of rage, Count Claude sprang aside from the window, and his sword was out almost at the same instant.

Captain Columbia drew back on the pavement with his sword presented at the wretch as he demanded in stern tones:

"Do you recognize me, Count Claude?"

The count glared at the young American in the dim light that came from the lamp suspended from one of the pillars and then fiercely responded:

"Yes, I do."

"Where did we meet?"

"At Turin, some years ago."

"Correct, count. Do you remember what I said to you then, when you cowardly insulted me, and when you were backed by a crowd of hired bravados?"

"You said that you would slay me," answered the count, with a sneer, "but you are a braggart and I will see that you do not keep your word."

The swords then flashed together furiously while Count Claude raised his voice to its highest pitch, crying:

"Treachery, treachery! Austrians, a friend calls on you to slay a French spy. Haste this way and we will secure the wretch."

As the count was thus speaking he kept defending himself against the furious onslaught made on him by the gallant young American.

The young lady sprang to the window and glared out, as she cried:

"A body of armed men come this way, and they are Austrians retreating from the ramparts. My brave young friend, fly before they put you to death."

At that the count's sword was dashed from his grasp and Captain Columbia pointed his own weapon at the traitor's breast, saying:

"You come with me on the instant, or I will slay you even in this place. Speak a word and I will silence you forever."

"I am your prisoner, and you can lead me where you please."

"Then march right back the way you came. Young lady, come with me and I will lead you safe back to Genoa at once. Haste, as the Austrians are thundering at the door and they will soon be in on us."

CHAPTER V.

A STRUGGLE FOR LOVE AND LIFE.

It would have been a comparatively easy matter for the gallant young American to slay the treacherous Italian on the instant, and then hasten away back through the dark passage with the young lady before the Austrian soldiers outside could perceive in what direction they had fled.

They were moving toward the underground passage at the moment with Count Claude walking in front of them, when the traitor suddenly sprang along the aisle toward the door, yelling aloud:

"Austrians, burst in the door, as a friend of yours is beset by a French spy. Burst in the door at once or dash in through the windows."

Captain Columbia sprang after the traitor, and the young lady sprang after him, as she gasped forth in imploring tones:

"Come back, come back, or they will slay you. Come, come, for my sake."

But the stubborn blood of the young American was aroused and he replied, saying:

"Not without that wretch. I will rescue you and I will take him back also, so that General Massena can deal with him."

The count had just reached the door, and he was about to withdraw the bolts, when Captain Columbia darted at him, seized him by the back of the neck and gave him a slight prod of the sword in the back as he hissed into his ears in deadly tones:

"Back with me or by all that's wicked I will slay you on the instant. Another word and you will die here in the church."

As the brave young American uttered the threat he dragged the count back from the door and then pushed him along toward the vault while he said to the young lady:

"Proceed ahead of us, Miss Ballou, and I assure you that I will guide you back in safety."

Just as they reached the door leading down into the vault or basement, the church door was burst in, while several of the Austrian soldiers sprang in through the window at the same time.

Then one of their officers sang out, crying:

"Who is it that called on us for assistance?"

The light was very dim in the large church, and the Austrians could not perceive Captain Columbia and his prisoner, who were then entering at the door leading down into the vault below.

The young lady was leading the way still.

When they reached the door leading to the long passage they could perceive a light burning at the foot of the steps.

Then Captain Columbia addressed the young lady again, saying:

"You can proceed now without fear. Take the light and walk ahead as fast as you can, while I lead on the prisoner."

The young lady did proceed along the dark passage as fast as possible, and Captain Columbia only waited to secure the last door before forcing his prisoner on after her.

The brave young man could then hear the Austrians searching around in the vault above, and he pushed Count Claude down before him as he hissed into his ear:

"Stride on ahead of me as fast as you may, but beware of another act of treachery on your part. Is that a secret door leading up from hence?"

"It is," replied the count. "It is only known to me and one other, and the Austrians cannot find it, I swear to you, on my honor."

"On your honor, indeed! I can only wonder that you did not lead the Austrians into Genoa by this passage before now."

A dark scowl appeared on the Italian's face as he responded, saying:

"You are mistaken in taking me for a traitor to the French. They are fighting to deliver Italy from Austrian tyranny and I would be base to betray them."

"There are traitors in every country, and I believe that you are one here. Did I not hear you avow to the young lady in the church above that you had given information to the enemy outside the ramparts?"

"That was but a foolish boast for my own purpose, and the proof is that I have not led them in by this passage before now."

"You can answer for that to General Massena and his officers. Perdition take you, the Austrians have found the door, and they are pushing in here after us."

As Captain Columbia uttered the last exclamation, they were pushing on through the dark passage as fast as possible, and they could then hear the heavy footsteps of the armed men moving down the steps, while the officer in command cried out:

"Forward with the torches, men, and we will soon be on the traitors. This passage must lead into the city."

The passage had several turns in it, and the fugitives could not be perceived by the soldiers behind them at the moment.

They did move on with great speed, moving silently on the soft earth at their feet.

When they struck the foundation under the ramparts, Captain Columbia stopped with his prisoner to listen, and when he did not hear a single sound of pursuit behind, he said to the young lady:

"They fear an ambush or a trap, and they have retreated again. General Massena must have this passage walled up and guarded in the morning."

"It will be too late then," hissed the prisoner, as he turned suddenly on Captain Columbia and dealt him a powerful blow on the temple.

The brave young American staggered under the blow, and before he could recover himself the traitor tore the sword from his grasp as he cried, aloud:

"Now I will punish you with death for the insults you have heaped on me."

Count Claude then drew back as if to give force to the blow he was about to deal, when the young lady turned with a cry of terror, exclaiming:

"In mercy hold, Count Claude."

Captain Columbia had then recovered from the effect of the blow, and he sprang back in the passage as he cried in defiant tones:

"You are not victor yet, traitor."

The active young fellow then bent suddenly down like a mountebank and sprang in on the count, seizing the hilt of the sword at the same moment as he continued to cry in jubilant tones:

"Now, it is hand to hand for it, and we'll see how an American can fight for love and life."

A fearful struggle then ensued, each man grasping at the sword with one hand while he dealt fearful blows with the other.

The young lady fairly gasped with terror and excitement as she held up the lamp, while she cried:

"Oh, how can I assist you, my brave young friend, as it is for me that you have risked so much? Would that I had a dagger to strike the wretch."

"You will not need the weapon, young lady," cried Captain Columbia, as he dealt his enemy a blow on the head that stretched him helpless in the dark passage, while he released his grasp on the sword at the same time.

Securing the weapon the young American placed it in his mouth, tore the scarf from around his waist and proceeded to bind his prisoner while Christine Ballou joyously exclaimed:

"Thank goodness you have conquered."

Having succeeded in securing the arms of the prisoner in the most effective manner, Captain Columbia sprang up and dragged him to his feet also, as he said to him in rough tones:

"I will not thank you to come along with me quietly, now, you vile traitor."

The Italian did not reply, but he bent a fearful scowl on his young conqueror as they marched on again, the young lady still leading the way.

When they had proceeded some distance Captain Columbia inquired:

"How did this wretch take you from the palace where I left you to-night, young lady?"

"I can only tell that I was seized by him in my private apartment when a handkerchief was tied over my mouth and I was borne along through some dark passages until we reached the street where you saw me. I then succeeded in tearing the handkerchief from my mouth to call for aid, and heaven bless you for coming to my rescue."

They had reached the vault under the mansion at the moment, and the young man was dragging his prisoner toward the stairs leading up to the apartment on the second story.

The young girl was still leading the way up the stairs with a lamp under the direction of her brave friend, when the Italian suddenly sprang forward and dashed her aside with his body, crying:

"I am not conquered yet, you dog, as you will soon see!"

The man then darted out of the doorway into the dark passage on the second floor, which Captain Columbia had left open on ascending into the vault in pursuit.

The young American sprang up past the young lady, and his hand was outstretched to keep the door open when it was closed from without with a bang, and then Count Claude's voice rang out in mocking tones, crying:

"My sweet young doves, you are caught in a nice trap now, and we will see if you can get out."

Captain Columbia flung himself against the door with all the strength he could command, as he replied:

"We are not caught in a trap, you vile fool, as I will rescue the lady yet, even if I have to take her out by way of the church and through the Austrian lines. I defy you once and forever!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE OTHER YOUNG AMERICAN.

While Captain Columbia was playing his part against the wily Italian his dear friend and companion in arms was not altogether idle.

When the first alarm rang out on the ramparts David Petersen was sleeping soundly in the palace then inhabited by the French general in Genoa.

Being a thorough soldier, the young man was soon aroused by the roaring of the cannon, and he sprang from his bed calling on his friend.

As they were to have slept together in the same apartment, and as the hour was late, David was surprised to find that Captain Columbia was not present.

As he hastened on with his clothes the sounds of strife became more general, and the young man at once comprehended that his brave friend had hastened away to assist in repelling the Austrians.

Seizing the arms supplied to him by the French general, which consisted of a sword and a pair of pistols, David Petersen sprang out into the hallway, where he encountered Massena himself, who was about to hasten to the ramparts.

"Where is Captain Columbia?" inquired the French general.

"I cannot say, General, as I retired to rest, leaving him with Colonel Lenard."

"Then he is on the ramparts with the colonel, and will you hasten there with me?"

"With pleasure, General Massena, as I long to be with my friend in the strife, as we have had the satisfaction of fighting together ere now."

Accompanied by a guard and several of his officers, the French general hastened out into the street, the young American bearing him company.

They had not proceeded far when the soldiers could tell that the struggle on the ramparts was over for the time, and that the Austrians were driven back.

General Massena was one of the most intrepid of the French officers who attempted to rival Napoleon Bonaparte at the time, and some of his admirers then contended that he was his equal in military skill.

Massena's defense of Genoa up to that time was simply superb, as he held the Italian city with a very inferior force against the flower of the Austrian army.

Although the signals from the ramparts indicated that the attack was over for the time, the French general pushed on in that direction, while he turned to one of his officers, saying:

"Something whispers to me that we will hear from the enemy again to-night, and we must be on the alert."

When David Peterson heard that a brisk engagement had taken place, he felt a little anxious about his friend, as he knew that Captain Columbia would be one of the foremost in the fray, and he said to himself:

"I cannot rest to-night again until I know that my brave friend is all safe."

The muttered words were scarcely uttered when Massena's surmises were verified, as a second alarm burst forth from the ramparts, and it was then that Colonel Lenard hastened away from Captain Columbia to lead some of the half-naked troops into action again.

As the second attack took place some distance from the spot where the Austrians had been at first repelled, General Massena and his friends did not pass Count Claude's mansion on their way to the scene of action, and they did not encounter Colonel Lenard either.

David Peterson was thus left in ignorance of the movements of his dear friend, and he supposed that he was still engaged with Colonel Lenard along the ramparts.

The second attack of the Austrians, as we have seen, was a more serious affair than even Massena anticipated, and the struggle that ensued was fierce and stubborn, but it ended in a second repulse of the enemy.

As the Austrians retreated from the ramparts some of the impetuous French pursued them, and then it was that Massena conceived the idea of making a sortie in force in the hope of achieving a decided success.

Calling on some of his bravest troops, the intrepid general led them in person out of the gates.

The brave defenders of Genoa did succeed in driving the enemy beyond the walls of the old church, where Captain Columbia had surprised Count Claude, and they captured the party who had hastened to the succor of the wily Italian.

The Austrians rallied in turn soon after and attacked the French in great force around the old church.

The French retreated to the ramparts fighting bravely, and at the very commencement of that retreat David Peterson received a ball on the temple that stretched him apparently lifeless for the time.

The accident occurred just outside the old church wall, and in the hurry of the retreat, deeming him lifeless, the French left their friend to the mercy of the Austrians.

All was quiet around the old church when David Peterson recovered his senses again, and it did not take the active young soldier very long to comprehend the position in which he was placed.

As he was an old campaigner for his age, he soon discovered that he had been only stunned by a spent ball from a musket, but he could not tell how long he had been insensible.

Raising his head from the ground he peered cautiously around, when he recognized the old church, and he then stole toward it.

He did notice several dead soldiers of the two nations lying around outside the walls, and the thought occurred to him that it would be a good plan for him to secure an Austrian uniform, as he said to himself:

"If the captain were only here now it would be a good chance for us to steal through the Austrian lines disguised in their uniforms. But how could we manage to pass the young lady with us?"

While thus muttering the young man slipped quietly in through the window, little dreaming that his good friend was close at hand at the moment.

Perceiving the door leading down into the vault, he moved toward it, as he said to himself:

"The Austrians will certainly be around here to bury their dead at daylight, and I must find a safe hiding-place."

After peering cautiously down into the dark vault David again said to himself:

"I will not venture down there without a light, and I will take the lamp hanging on the pillar."

Having secured the lamp the young man descended cautiously, when he soon discovered the secret door leading down into the narrow passage, which had been left open by the Austrian soldiers, who retreated therefrom in some haste on hearing the sounds of strife around the old church.

"Where can this lead us?" he said to himself as he descended some of the steps, holding the light before him. "Who knows but it may conduct me to some safer refuge than this old church will be at daylight?"

He had scarcely reached the foot of the steps when a brighter light ahead attracted his attention and then a well known voice fell on his ear, saying:

"Courage, dear lady, as I feel certain that the Austrians have retreated to their trenches back of the church. Confound it all, who is that?"

David Peterson sprang forward on recognizing the voice of his friend, and then it was that Captain Columbia uttered the last exclamation.

Joyous was the meeting between the two companions, each being very much surprised at beholding the other in the narrow passage.

Some hurried explanations ensued, and when Captain Columbia was informed that the Austrians were not in possession of the old church, he turned to Christine Ballou, saying:

"We are very fortunate after all, dear young lady, and we will baffle your enemy in a manner he least expects."

The two friends and the young lady then hastened up to the vestry-room behind the altar, deeming that the safest spot for the time.

Placing the young lady on a chair, Captain Columbia drew his friend to the door of the vestry-room, saying:

"We must keep watch here against surprise, as we are liable to be attacked in front or rear."

Captain Columbia then went on to tell his friend why he returned to the church again with the young lady.

Captain Columbia then informed his friend of his intention of not returning to Genoa, but pushing his way through the Austrian lines with the lady and proceeding to Marengo, where General Bonaparte was expected to meet his foes after crossing the Alps.

"But will not General Massena be surprised at your leaving Genoa without consulting him further?" suggested David Peterson.

"I have thought of the means of informing him, and also of warning him about the secret passage leading from hence into Genoa.

"How is that to be done without our returning?"

"The Italian peasants around here hate the Austrians and they are devoted to the French. We can find some brave fellows who will be willing to risk their lives in bearing a message into Genoa to General Massena. I also expect to meet French scouts or spies along the route who are making their way to the city with tidings to Massena from General Bonaparte."

The two friends had returned to the vestry-room while they

were thus speaking, where they found the young lady sound asleep on the chair.

Casting a tender glance at the sleeping beauty, Captain Columbia said:

"It is a pity to disturb her, but we must try to get through the Austrian lines before daylight."

"Have you money with you?" inquired David Peterson.

Drawing forth a heavy purse, the other replied with a smile:

"General Massena supplied me last night. What we now require are good disguises, three horses, and an Italian guide, who could also be relied on to return to Genoa with a message from me."

The door of the closet in the vestry-room was flung open at the moment, and a young fellow dressed as an Italian peasant appeared before the two friends with a smile on his dark countenance, saying:

"I will act as your guide, gentlemen, as I love the French and I hate the Austrian tyrants."

Captain Columbia then sprang forward and seized the youth as he demanded:

"Who is in that closet with you?"

"No one, sir."

"Who and what are you?"

"I am an Italian boy, and I am known as Carlo. I resided four miles back on the mountain, but the Austrians drove us from our home, slew my father and robbed us of our flock."

"What are you doing here?" demanded Captain Columbia.

"I was trying to get into Genoa last night to join the French and strike against the tyrants when the Austrian soldiers pursued me. I sought refuge in here while the battle was going on, and I heard what you had to say to your friend and the young lady."

Captain Columbia stared intently at the boy for a few moments, and he then turned to his friend with a nod as he remarked in his own language:

"I think we can trust him."

"I think so, too, as he appears to have an honest, intelligent face."

Captain Columbia then put several questions to the boy, all of which were answered with apparent candor.

Having thus satisfied his new friends, Carlo pointed to the closet, saying:

"Gentlemen, you will there find the best disguises wherever with to baffle the Austrians."

"What are they?" inquired Captain Columbia.

"Hooded cloaks belonging to the monks who fled from here. With those on you, you may not be molested if we meet the Austrians, but I feel certain that I can guide you from hence by paths in the woods so that you will not encounter their patrols."

After consulting together, the two friends resolved to place themselves under the guidance of the Italian boy, and as the hour of daylight was fast approaching, they were compelled to arouse the young lady, while Captain Columbia said to her:

"We trust to find a place where you can rest very soon after passing the Austrian lines, and it will be wise for us to leave here as soon as possible."

The young lady stared at the Italian boy while her protector explained who he was, and she then inquired of the youth:

"Have I not seen you in Genoa before now?"

The boy's swarthy face colored a little before he answered:

"That may be, young lady, as I visited the city several times before the siege to sell goat's milk and fruit."

"Do you know Count Claude?" inquired the young lady.

"I do know the treacherous wretch, and would that I had power to slay him."

Captain Columbia was about to question the boy again in reference to the count when a noise was heard at the door leading down into the vault.

"That is Count Claude and his crew," said Captain Columbia, as they all hastened to array themselves in the cloaks found in the closet. "The wretch must have learned that the French have retreated to the city again, and they have come out here through the passage in search of us. Let us now away, and heaven help you, boy, if you betray us."

"Slay me on the instant that you observe any sign of treachery on my part," responded the boy, in indignant tones.

While the boy was thus speaking they were hastening out of the church, and Count Claude and his friends were thundering at the door in a manner that threatened to force it open very soon.

CHAPTER VII.

AS GOOD AS HIS WORD.

When the brave Italian boy and his new friends left the church that morning Count Claude and his band succeeded in forcing the door very soon after.

When the Italian found that Captain Columbia had left the building with the young lady he hastened at once to the Austrian trenches and gave the alarm.

Parties of horse and foot were sent out to scour the woods and mountains on all sides, yet Carlo managed to guide his new friends to a retreat ten miles away from Genoa before daylight was far advanced.

That retreat was a small, out-of-the-way tavern which was resorted to by very few travelers, while it had a bad reputation with the peasants in the neighborhood.

Young Carlo spoke to Captain Columbia about the character of the place, and added:

"But I think you will be safe here, gentlemen, until night, when I can return from Genoa and guide you safe on your way to the plain near the Alps, if we can but procure horses."

As the young lady was very tired after the journey, she retired to rest soon after reaching the tavern, her two friends taking turns in watching the door of her apartment, while the others rested some hours.

Holding full reliance in the honesty of his guide, Captain Columbia addressed a note to General Massena, giving an account of his adventures and of the secret passage leading out through the old church.

The young guide started away on his perilous journey, saying:

"If I am not taken by the Austrians I will be back here again before nightfall. In the meantime I would advise you, gentlemen, especially as you can speak Italian, to procure suits of humble garments which the landlord can furnish you with, and the young lady should do likewise."

Deeming the advice a good one, the young Americans applied to the landlord, who promised to fit them out in two sets of plain garments, such as the women of the peasants of the country, and to furnish the young lady with a plain traveling costume also.

The man also expressed a hope of being able to procure three sure-footed horses to bear them over the mountain paths leading to the broad plains near the Alps.

After dark of the evening set in, Carlo returned from Genoa with a note from General Massena to Captain Columbia, in which the Austrians were urged to push on further, so as to keep up with the young lady, and to inform General Brera that Genoa would be held at all costs.

Carlo informed Captain Columbia that a strict search was being made for Count Claude in Genoa, and that it was supposed that the traitor was then with the Austrians outside the city.

Carlo also said that the secret passage was secured by the masons, but masons were at work walling it up, and that the Austrians were also placed at certain points therein to stop the Americans up if they attempted to steal a march through it at night.

The daring boy received the thanks of his new friends with a smile of pleasure, but he refused the gold piece offered him by Captain Columbia, saying:

"I will not be accomplished until I guide you to the place where the traitor and his band will be punished, Count Claude."

A little after dark the landlord of the tavern returned after making a search for horses, when he informed the young Americans that horses could be procured, but that the horses could not be had to the tavern, bearing a trap on the mountain side.

The next day Captain Columbia in confidence that the Americans had come to the tavern said that he was known in the town of Genoa, that he was then up at a certain point on the mountain, and that Carlo would guide the Americans to him to explain the negotiations for the use of horses.

The young boy said to the American that he would be glad to make a visit to the right side, saying, "I am a good boy, the Americans will be safe all the time I am with them. If you go with me I will take my chance with the Austrians, for I am not afraid of them. The Americans have traveled through the country. How to many villages, and I am sure that the mountain dare not venture down here to attack us."

The brave American had no suspicions of treachery, and he started away with the boy, leaving David Peterson to watch over the weary young lady, who was still resting in a bedroom.

As he walked along with the bright boy up the mountain side the night was darkening over them, but they could perceive parties of mounted Austrians dashing to and fro in the valley below.

Captain Columbia became very much alarmed when he perceived one party riding in the direction of the tavern, and he said to his young friend:

"I fear that I have made a mistake in leaving my friends after me. The Austrians are riding toward the tavern, and I must hasten back at once."

"If you so desire, good sir," replied the boy, "I will hasten up to see Captain Bianco and bring him to your aid, if it is necessary."

"Do so, my boy, as I fear that my friends cannot escape from the Austrians without some aid."

The energetic boy hastened up the mountain, and Captain Columbia ran down the side.

As the brave soldier drew near the tavern in the most cautious manner, he could perceive that a body of Austrian dragoons, about thirty in number, had taken possession of the place, having posted their mounted guards in such a manner as to cut off the escape of the inmates.

Having served as a scout in Egypt, the brave American ran up the side of the mountain and entered the place, if possible so as to learn the fate of his friends.

On peering in through the back windows some of Captain Columbia's worst fears were realized, as he saw that his young friend was a prisoner in the hands of the Austrian dragoons, and that he bore signs of having passed through a desperate struggle.

Then a muttered exclamation of rage burst from Captain Columbia as he recognized the officer in command of the party, who was no other than Count Claude, in Austrian uniform.

The landlord was also a prisoner, and Count Claude was holding a pistol to his head at the moment, threatening him with instant death if he did not confess where his young lady guest and the other American were concealed in the place.

The landlord became terrified, as it was evident that he knew the character of the count, and he replied in trembling tones:

"The young lady is upstairs, but I swear to you, Captain Claude, that the other strange youth has gone up to the mountain."

Ordering some of his men to secure the landlord, the Italian traitor sprang toward the stairway.

Christine Ballou had just partaken of some supper in her bedroom, and she was about to go out to play, when the sound of firing killed her by the ball, when she heard the tramping of the horses and cavalry, and then the sound of strife in the main room below her.

"Mercy on me," exclaimed the young woman, "my brave friends will be slain in trying to defend me, and I can hear the voice of that cruel Count Claude. It seems that I am doomed to fall into his power."

The agitated girl was so affected by the fresh misfortune that she almost sank senseless on the floor; but she recovered her self-possession with a desperate effort, and looked around the room until her eye fell on the curtained window which looked out into the yard.

The window was high, and the fair girl was compelled to stand on a chair to jump over.

When she saw that the place was surrounded by mounted Austrians, her heart almost failed her again, and she sprung down from the chair as she uttered forth:

"I am too low, as the wretches must have tracked me to this place in some way."

At that moment the door was burst in by Count Claude, who sprang to seize her as he cried:

"Christine Ballou are in my power, my dear young lady, and now you will be my traitor."

The young girl sprang away from the wretched, and dashed herself into the street, and struggled forth:

"I will never be your traitor, Count Claude, you infamis traitor."

Count Claude cut his way around the room, which was furnished in excellent style for a place of the kind, and a malicious smile appeared on his face as he remarked in malignant tones:

"This is not the first time that I have been here, and I know it is the rendezvous of the infamis bandit. Did you come here to meet Captain Bianco, whom you knew in Genoa by another name some time ago?"

"I do not know Captain Bianco, and I only came here to escape from your persecutions in Genoa."

"Where is that other American adventurer with whom you fled from my mansion?"

"Then you have not taken Captain Columbia, and I thank heaven that he has escaped. All hope is not lost, then, as he will rescue me if he is free."

"He will soon be my prisoner, as I now go forth to hunt him down, and he will die the death of a spy before your very eyes. Think not that you can escape from hence, as my troops guard the house."

Thus speaking, Count Claude hastened out of the room, closing and bolting the door after him.

A very slight noise at the window attracted the attention of the distressed girl at the moment, and on looking up she perceived a white object pushed on the blade of a sword.

Fairly tottering toward the window the fair maiden looked up at the sword and the object, as she gasped forth:

"It is a note on the steel, and it is intended for me. Now may it please heaven that it will bring good tidings to me of brave Captain Columbia."

Hastening to the lamp which was burning in the corner of the room, the young woman read the note twice over before she fell on her knees and clasped her hands as she mentally cried:

"It is from Captain Columbia, and he swears that he will soon rescue me or die in the attempt. How well do I know that he will keep his oath if it is in the power of a man to do it. Thank goodness that he is a free man yet, but oh, the dangers that he will have to encounter in my behalf this night."

The young girl then cast her eyes up at the partly open window, and when she noticed the sword-blade was withdrawn again she sank on a chair to watch for the return of her gallant protector and to pray for his safety in the great perils he must encounter that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

THROUGH MANY DANGERS.

It was Captain Columbia who delivered the note to Christine Ballou on the blade of his sword.

In order to accomplish thatfeat the daring young man had to climb up on a tree some distance from the window, and then crawl out on one of the branches, where he was in danger of falling to the ground every moment, as well as being perceived by the Austrian dragoons on guard.

From his position on the tree the gallant young soldier could perceive the distress of the young girl inside the room, and he was almost tempted to spring in and attempt her rescue, but reckless as he was, he had sense enough to know that such a course would be the height of madness indeed.

Before he could make up his mind, however, the noise of the thick woods around him caused him to drop down again.

"I must be secure that powerful as he looks like a splendid animal as far as I can see."

It was no sooner conceived when the brave soldier was about to put it into execution.

As the two opposing English passed near the tavern, the reckless young American dropped down on the ground behind the dragoon, hurling him from the saddle.

He then sprang up and seized the dragoon's horse, and the two combatants were soon in the air, the young American riding the animal and the dragoon falling to the ground.

After a short struggle the dragoon was overpowered and thrown to the ground, and one of them fled out.

"Curb the horse before he gets up the mountain, or you will be captured by Bianco."

The man who had been flung to the ground then sprang to his feet, yelling:

"There, the wretch, as it must have been the mad bandit that I saw in the woods, and I will not let him get away."

As the dragoon sprang to his feet he discovered the courage, and

and called on his men to follow the daring rider, while he yelled:

"It must be that infernal French spy who was concealed in the house. Pursue him up the mountain and shoot the horse, if necessary."

Captain Columbia laughed in his sleeve as he dashed up on the good horse, and he was soon out of reach of the stray bullets sent after him.

Fearing an ambush, Count Claude soon recalled his men, while he prepared to defend the tavern should the outlaws from the mountain be daring enough to make an attack on them.

The famous Bianco was not a bandit by profession, although he was regarded as such by the Austrians, by whom he was outlawed for two years previous to the siege of Genoa.

Captain Columbia was very anxious to see the remarkable man that night, as he had heard much about him from Carlo and the landlord during the evening, and he had some reason to hope that the outlaw would be daring enough to make a descent on the Austrians.

The American kept up the Italian patriot war-cry as he rode up the mountain path, but he had not proceeded very far when Carlo appeared before him, crying:

"Halt, friend of Italy, as you are near some brothers-in-arms now."

Captain Columbia did halt as soon as he recognized the boy's voice and he responded, saying:

"It was just as I feared, good Carlo, as my friends are prisoners in Count Claude's power. If it is possible lead me at once into the presence of your chief as I desire to beg his aid."

An ugly imprecation burst from the lips of the boy, but before he could respond a tall man in the garb of a peasant stepped out from behind the rock and cried out in clear, ringing tones:

"Stranger, I am known as Bianco, and what would you say to me?"

Springing from the horse, the young American raised his hat to the outlaw chief as he replied in his own blunt and manly fashion:

"I am an American and I am known as Captain Columbia. I serve with the French at present and I am now engaged with a beloved comrade on an important mission for General Massena."

"I have so understood from the boy here, who assured me that you were a true soldier of the French republic. What can I do for you?"

"A beloved friend and a dear young lady have been taken prisoners by a person known as Count Claude, now serving with the Austrians. If it is possible, I would crave your aid in rescuing them."

"How many do the tyrants number down in yonder tavern at present?"

"Not more than fifty."

"I cannot muster more than half that number to-night, and it would be madness to attack our enemies with such a force while they remain down there."

"Then I must return alone and try strategy in rescuing my friends. If I succeed, Captain Bianco, will you furnish us with three horses, as was suggested to you by your friend down at the tavern, who is also a prisoner at present?"

"You will not go alone to rescue your friends, as I will accompany you. I cannot ask my followers to face death in such a desperate enterprise, but I am my own master, and I will go with you."

"And so will I, brave stranger," said Carlo, as he caught the young American's hand and kissed it.

Captain Bianco then asked the young American several questions relating to Count Claude and the position of his men, as well as regarding the prisoners.

It was very evident that the chief took a deep interest in the young girl, that he hated the man who was persecuting her, and that he would go to any lengths on his own account to baffle his enemies, but he was not inclined to risk the lives of his followers in what appeared to be such a desperate enterprise.

"Could we not use your men to draw off the Austrians from the tavern without exposing them?" suggested Captain Co-

"That may be done, but you must remember that Count Claude is a dangerous fellow, and he is not to be trifled with before now. You and I will move down with the boy here and make observations. My men will not be far off, and I will use them if I see an opportunity to do so."

"Then I will go with you, and we will be ready to start at daybreak."

to one of his followers, and the boy turned to Captain Columbia, and inquired:

"Does he remind you of any one, sir?"

"He does remind me of Count Claude somewhat, but I trust that he is a very different stamp of man."

"The same mother gave them birth, but their fathers were as different men as they are. The man known as Count Claude is a cruel and an infamous fiend, while Captain Bianco is one of nature's noblemen. He is a true patriot, a valiant man, and he is beloved by all who know him around here."

Before Carlo could sing the praises of the outlaw in a warmer strain, that person stepped out from behind the rock again, and inquired of Captain Columbia:

"Will you leave that good horse with us for the present, or will you ride him down the mountain again?"

"That is as you may suggest, Captain Bianco."

"Then I would advise you to leave him here with my men, and he will not be as likely to fall into the hands of his old master again. We are bound on a dangerous enterprise, and who can tell if either of us will survive it."

"I am not a boaster," replied Captain Columbia in modest tones, "but I have been accustomed to scenes of danger, and I would risk a hundred lives, if they were mine to give to-night, for even a chance of rescuing my brave young friend and the young lady."

The three new friends conversed freely as they descended the mountain, and Captain Columbia soon realized that Bianco was a man of surprising intelligence, courage and resolution.

As they neared a small wood some distance from the tavern the active boy was sent forward as a scout, and they all proceeded in a very cautious manner.

Happening to cast his eye back toward the mountain, Captain Columbia could notice several dark forms moving down after them, and he turned to his new friend with a smile as he said to him:

"I see that your men are not deserting you, good Captain Bianco."

"My men would follow me into the very jaws of death if I so ordered them, but we have suffered heavily in some recent skirmishes, and I am more careful of them than I have been."

On reaching the wood the two men paused to await the return of the bright boy who was acting as the scout, when Bianco informed his companion that he knew Christine Ballou in Genoa well, and that he very much as a pure and noble young lady, and that he was only too willing to risk his own life over and over again in rescuing her from Count Claude's clutches.

Carlo returned in about fifteen minutes, when he informed his friends that the tavern was utterly deserted, and that Count Claude and his men must have moved off in haste with their prisoner.

On hearing the statement the outlaw chief shook his head and remarked:

"I think they are striving to lead us into a snare, and we will have to be very cautious in our movements now."

Carlo hastened to go forward and search the house, but Captain Columbia followed, saying a word to him himself, saying:

"You are saving your lives in my behalf and I must face the consequences. Remain here on the alert and I will move forward as quickly as possible."

On reaching the yard behind the tavern the brave young outlaw turned to the tree which had aided him before as he prepared to leave it.

"I will go up the trunk and see if I can get into the room where the boy was kept a prisoner. If the Americans or British or French, they must have taken their horses with them, and I will follow."

The outlaw chief was soon up in the branches of the tree, and he had not even called a point of observation when he could see a dark glint of light from the house.

He could hear the voices from the house, and the stamping of feet, and the clatter of the dragoons on foot, and he could hear the horses and calling in excited tones:

"Come on, and the sooner the better. I will climb up the tree, and we will be safe. I will be safe. Come down, you cunning dog, and I will get you with bullets."

"I will not let you get away, and I will not let you get away. I will not let you get away. I will not let you get away."

"I will not let you get away, and I will not let you get away. I will not let you get away. I will not let you get away."

He fell heavily on the floor inside, but he was soon on his feet again, and making for the door with his sword in his hand, as he said to himself:

"Now to make my way to the front of the house, and then for a dash for life."

Fortunately the bedroom door stood open, and the daring man gained the hall outside, where a light was burning at the further end.

Even in that moment of danger Captain Columbia did not think of his own safety as he yelled aloud to his friends, crying:

"Where are you, David? Miss Ballou, can I not hasten to your rescue?"

There was no response by the friends thus called on, but Count Claude rushed up the stairs with over a dozen of the dragoons yelling:

"We have got the rascal now. Out to the front to cut off his retreat there."

CHAPTER IX.

TO THE PLAINS OF MARENGO.

When the shouts and cries were heard around the tavern the boy Carlo became fearfully impatient, and he said to Bianco:

"In heaven's name, call on your followers to rush to the assistance of the brave stranger."

"It is but an alarm, and they have not taken or slain the brave youth yet. They prepared an ambush for us all, and it would be madness for us to rush into it, you impulsive child."

Grakan after groan escaped from Carlo as he listened in dreadful anxiety, but he was at length compelled to admit the wisdom of his chief.

In the meantime Captain Columbia reached an alcove, where a lamp was burning, and he seized it on the instant and blew it out, when the hallway was in darkness.

Count Claude and his followers rushed toward the front window at the end of a hallway just as the brave young American dashed it open and sprang out upon the balcony.

Several of the soldiers had rushed out to the front of the house, and some shots were fired at the fugitive as he dashed along the balcony and sprang down to the side of the yard facing the little wood where his Italian friends were awaiting him.

Young Carlo was fairly frantic when he heard the shots, and he attempted to break away from his chief again as he groaned forth:

"Oh, why not fly to the rescue of the brave stranger with your men now? I fear that you have the heart of a woman after all."

At that moment a dark form came dashing toward the wood from the tavern, and the outlaw chief drew back with his young friend, as he said to him:

"Here comes the brave American now, and you see that he has not been slain."

It was Captain Columbia who had thus bravely escaped death for the second time that night, and warm was the welcome he received from his two friends as he stopped before them in the retreat, saying:

"That was close work, but I believe that I got off without a scratch. Why did they not pursue me further, think you?"

"Because Count Claude fears that we may ambush him in here," answered Bianco. "Did you see anything of your friends in the tavern?"

"I did not, and I fear that they have been taken off toward Genoa."

"We will soon know about that," responded the outlaw.

Bianco then sent forth a peculiar signal, which resembled the cry of a startled night-bird, while he led his two friends up in the direction of the mountain.

The boy had traveled very far through the wood when the cry was uttered and one of the Italian outlaws soon appeared before his chief.

Motioning Bianco aside, the man spoke to him in low and earnest tones, pointing at the same time to a dark wood about a half mile on the other side of the tavern.

The outlaw chief then turned and addressed his friends in pleasant tones, saying:

"Now, Captain Columbia, you will have a chance to show your valor in behalf of your friends, and you will see, child, that I am not a coward. Come on with me as fast as you can."

"Well, we will go with you," said Captain Columbia of the outlaw chief.

"Your friends are held as prisoners in that wood beyond the tavern, and I am going to see what we can do in their behalf."

"Then let us make all speed possible," said the impetuous young American, and started on at a run.

The others proceeded with equal speed, Bianco acting as guide in the cautious circuit they were compelled to make while working around to the desired point.

The night was still very dark, yet the keen eyes of the young American could detect several forms hastening down from the mountain paths to a certain point, and he also noticed that some of the outlaws were mounted.

Bianco and his new friends were the first to reach the rendezvous appointed, but the outlaws soon came pouring in by twos and threes, until the anxious young American was able to count fully twenty followers of Bianco, who were ready to dash on the hated Austrians.

Captain Columbia could notice that the Italians were all armed with muskets and bayonets—that some of them carried pistols in their belts, and that they wore a simple uniform peculiar to the natives of the hills.

There were six or seven good horses in the party, and one of them was the good steed which the daring young American had recently captured.

Without uttering an order above a whisper, the outlaw chief gave his directions for the assault, all of his men being requested to move through the wood on foot.

The man who had discovered the prisoners and their guards led the way as their guide.

Special instructions were given as to the use of fire-arms, so as not to endanger the lives of either of the prisoners in the struggle.

While they were thus moving along, Christine Ballou and David Peterson were conversing concerning the shots they had heard from the tavern, and the young girl was saying in very subdued tones:

"I fear that the cunning Count Claude has caught our dear friend in a trap, as I now perceive why we were removed to this wood."

A confident smile appeared on the face of the young American as he replied:

"Captain Columbia is as lucky as he is brave, and I will ever trust in his good fortune. I will venture my life that he will find some means of attempting our rescue before they can take us back toward Genoa."

Another moment a shrill cry was heard very close to them, and then on through the dark wood at their Austrian foes rushed the Italian outlaws, Captain Columbia and Bianco leading the way.

Not a single shot was fired on the side of the outlaws, but they all charged on with their sabres, using the cold steel on their surprised enemies.

Captain Columbia charged right at those who were guarding his friends, and he struck down an Austrian dragoon with every blow of his sword.

Bianco fought with equal vigor and fury, while each and all of his men struggled as only men will who are fighting with halters around their necks.

The two Americans all looked in the fray, but he seemed to be in search of Count Claude, who was not engaged in the struggle.

The Austrians who survived the first attack soon followed their flying horses in every direction through the wood, while Captain Columbia and his men endeavored to secure as many of the survivors as possible.

As they were passing the mountain held by the young lady and David Peterson, when a bullet shot from the direction of the wood struck them, so that it was time to mount and away to the plain.

As soon as every one of the Austrian horses had been secured, all the outlaws and the late prisoners were supplied with sabres, and away to the mountain the party rode at full speed, Count Claude and his men being too late to intercept them.

When they reached a certain point on the mountain, Bianco stopped to give the Americans and the young girl over to the protection of the Indians, which they could hope to avoid, as the bands of Austria who were passing toward the Alps were intercepting Napoleon.

Captain Columbia stopped on a high ridge of the pass, as the boy had been ordered to do, and more Indians to follow him.

The Indians were soon on the ridge, and the Count Claude and his men were soon on the plain, as they could tell the broad plains of Marengo.

As they could only travel by night and by slow stages at that, they did not reach the heights of Marengo until the third day after leaving Genoa.

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER WONDERFUL ADVENTURE.

When Captain Columbia and his friends reached a point on the mountain overlooking the plains of Marengo a consultation was held.

It was then decided that Christine Ballou should remain in the neighborhood with the outlaws for a day or two, while the two young Americans would attempt to push on to the French camp. The young lady readily consented to remain.

Captain Columbia did not hesitate in leaving the young lady in charge of Captain Bianco, as he had perfect confidence in the outlaw chief, whom he had learned to regard as a brave and honorable man during their brief acquaintance.

While resting on the mountain during the day, the gallant Americans learned some important tidings regarding the movements of the Austrian armies marching to oppose the young French general.

At the time of which we write Napoleon Bonaparte was only First Consul of France, but it was generally believed that he would be honored with a higher title if successful in the great campaign then opening in Italy.

That campaign had been planned by the French general before leaving Paris, and it is recorded that his combinations were so arranged as to force the Austrians to fight him on his chosen battleground, namely the plains of Marengo.

After crossing the snow-clad Alps with his mighty army and deploying on the plains below, the French general was somewhat disappointed at not finding the Austrians there to encounter him.

The great French general then made certain other movements tending to force the Austrians to the spot he had chosen, and which would also prevent the enemy from sending large reinforcements to the siege of Genoa.

When the French entered Italy, General Bonaparte was ignorant as to the true state of affairs at Genoa, yet he had confidence in the intrepid Massena holding out there for some time, while he was most anxious to receive late tidings from the besieged city also.

Captain Columbia was well aware that he was the bearer of the important tidings, and he was willing to risk his life a hundred times over in order to reach Napoleon Bonaparte at the earliest moment.

On the morning when the two Americans and their friends reached the mountain overlooking the plains, only a small portion of the great Austrian army appeared to oppose the legions of France.

During the day, however, Captain Bianco received reliable information that other large corps of the enemy were moving toward Marengo, and that Napoleon Bonaparte would be soon compelled to encounter an immense force on his own chosen battle ground.

On the receipt of the important information thus obtained, the daring young American was still more anxious to push on to the French camp and lay the facts before General Bonaparte.

At the dusk of the evening the two friends started down from the mountain disguised as rough Italian peasants, and with their faces discolored by a juice prepared for them under Captain Bianca's directions.

They soon struck on a village, about four miles from the extreme end of the vast plain of Marengo, which they found in possession of the Austrians.

Not deeming it advisable to push on until the darkness of the night had fully set in, Captain Columbia and his friend entered a small tavern at the end of the village and dined for some bread and wine.

While they were seated at the table, Captain Columbia perceived the Austerian soldier passing by toward the village, and Captain Bianco whispered to his friend, saying:

"The great battle will commence early in the morning, and we must be on hand to see it."

At that instant a party of dragoons pulled up outside the tavern as if intending to halt there for the time.

What the two friends did not know was that the dragoons were a party of Indians, and that they had been sent to intercept and capture the two Americans.

The Indian chief cast his eyes on the strangers, who turned quickly to the table at which they were seated, and made them a certain sign, as he remarked, in very tolerable English.

"Be careful, friends, as keen eyes will soon be on you in this place."

The words were scarcely uttered by the old man when Count Claude strutted into the tavern, followed by two Austrian officers.

The two young Americans did not pretend to notice their enemy's appearance, while the old man who had given them the warning slipped out through the back door before they could address him.

"That old fellow must be one of our friends on the mountain," remarked David Peterson, in tones that could not be overheard by Count Claude.

"I do not remember to have seen him up there," responded Captain Columbia, "and yet his voice sounds familiar to me. Finish your bread and wine, and let us be on the move, as that Italian traitor has sharp eyes indeed."

It was necessary, therefore, for the young adventurers to leave the place as soon as possible, and without increasing the suspicions of the keen-eyed traitor whose eye was on them.

While Captain Columbia was studying as to the best course to be pursued, Count Claude arose from the table and strode toward them, crying:

"Where do you rogues come from?"

Captain Columbia stared up in a stupid manner, and pointed in the direction beyond the tavern as he replied in gruff tones:

"From the village beyond there, sir."

The count then turned abruptly to the landlord, and demanded:

"Do you know these rascals?"

The landlord advanced with a smile, and nodded at the two strangers as he replied in prompt and confident tones:

"I do know them, captain. They are neighbors of mine from Ravela, and I will vouch that they are good and peaceable citizens."

While the landlord was thus replying, an old Italian woman entered the tavern and moved toward the two strangers who were under suspicion.

The old man who had addressed them before appeared at the back door at the same time and spoke to the old woman, saying:

"Our sons will go home with us now, mother, and we will have to take the side road to the river, as the troops crowd the main road too much."

Captain Columbia took the hint on the moment, as he felt assured that the old couple were sent to aid them by the outlaw chief.

Draining the last drop of wine in his cup, he arose with a yawn, saying:

"Very good, mother, and we will go home with you now; but I would like another drink of wine."

"You have had enough of wine, my son, and it is getting late. The cart is awaiting us outside, and the horse is restive to be home, old as he is."

The old man had already moved toward the front door, and the old woman followed him, dragging her two pretended sons along with her, while she cast timid glances at the Austrian officers.

When Captain Columbia reached the door, he perceived a country cart and an old horse standing close to the fence a little distance beyond the tavern, and at a point where a side road branched off from the main thoroughfare.

Striding along with the careless gait of an Italian peasant, he followed the old couple to the cart, and David Peterson walked by his side without uttering a word.

Captain Columbia followed them to the door and stared after them as he muttered to himself:

"I have a suspicion that they are spies of Bianco, and I will see that they are well watched. It would be well to arrest them at once, but I do not care to be encumbered with prisoners on the eve of battle."

The soldiers outside did not attempt to molest the pretended peasants, and they all got into the cart, the old man urging the horse along the side road as he turned to his wife, saying:

"We should have been home ere now."

"That we should," replied the old woman, as she cast a reproachful glance at her pretended sons; "but boys will be boys, and the wine is sweet at the tavern."

Captain Columbia and his friends did not say a word until the cart had proceeded some distance along the lonely road, when he addressed the old man and inquired:

"Who are you, my friend?"

The old man cast cautious glances about, and then replied:

"I am Bianco's friend."

"Then we thank you very much indeed, as I am certain that you got us out of a bad position. Where are you taking us to now?"

"To the river, from thence you can cross over to the plains of Marengo."

"Will we encounter any of the Austrians by this route?" inquired the young American.

Before the old man could reply a startled exclamation burst from the old woman, and David Peterson said to his young friend:

"The dragoons are after us now."

Captain Columbia looked back and perceived six dragoons riding after them at full speed, while another glance at the tavern told him that the others there were in motion.

Addressing the old man, Captain Columbia asked:

"Do you think that they are after us, friend?"

"I fear they are, sir. Keep silent and I will speak to them if they stop us."

The dragoons rode up to the wagon, and the sergeant in command of the party called on the old man in German to draw up on the instant.

As he gave the order he drew up with his men in front of the wagon, thus blocking the way for the humble travelers.

The old man jabbered away in Italian, while the Austrian sergeant shook his head and intimated that he had nothing to say until his officers came up.

Captain Columbia could then perceive Count Claude riding toward them at the head of his men, and he turned to the old Italian as he whispered to him:

"I fear that you have got into trouble on our account, my good friend."

"Fear not on our account," was the brave reply, "but look well to yourselves."

Count Claude halted his party when they reached the travelers, and he then addressed the old man in stern tones as he demanded:

"Where does this road lead to?"

"To the River Bormida, sir, and to the village where we reside on this side."

"Is there a bridge at that point?"

"No, sir."

The count then cast a suspicious glance at the two young strangers and inquired:

"Do you rascals know a certain Captain Bianco, and have you not served with him?"

Captain Columbia felt that it would be folly to deny all knowledge of the celebrated outlaw, and he promptly replied:

"We have heard of Captain Bianco, sir, but we are peaceable villagers, and we never served under the famous bandit, you may be certain."

"I am not certain of anything of the kind, you rascals, but I am certain that I have seen you both somewhere before. Turn back the cart and proceed with us along the main road. Perdition take me if I do not believe that you are French spies!"

Captain Columbia felt that the moment had come for a desperate movement on the part of himself and his friends, and he whispered to David, saying:

"We must secure two of their horses before we reach the main road and dash back toward the river. I will make at Count Claude here on the right, and you take the Austrian officer on the left, as I perceive that they are both well mounted."

"All right, my brave friend," was the ready response, "but what about our old friends?"

"They must shift for themselves in the excitement of the fray, and we will not betray them in any case. It is a matter of life or death, and we must act on the instant or we are lost."

"Then act and I am with you," said David.

And the two friends did act on the instant in a manner that surprised their foes.

Count Claude was riding on one side of the cart and an Austrian officer was moving along on the other.

The last words were scarcely uttered by David Peterson when Captain Columbia made a sudden spring from the cart and landed behind Count Claude on the horse as he passed into his car in Italian:

"We are true Italians!"

As the brave man uttered the words he drew the count's sword from its scabbard, dealing him a blow on the side of the head at the same time that David sprang on one side of the road.

The two men leaped to the ground and the count lay flat on the ground, and David with the sword ready to strike as he cried.

"Long live Italy, and death to the Austrian tyrants!"

David Peterson scarcely waited to see his friend spring on the count's horse when he leaped on the back of the Austrian steed, treating its rider in a similar manner.

Wheeling the spirited animal around, he dashed at the dragoons also, as he echoed the cry of his brave friend.

There was a cry of alarm burst from the Austrians as the two friends went crushing through their rear rank, cutting down all who opposed them, and then away on the lonely road toward the river dashed the two gallant friends, as they shouted:

"Long live Italy, and death to all Austrian tyrants and traitors."

The old couple had taken the hint, as they had disappeared from the road, and were making their way in a small wood running on the side of the road.

CHAPTER XI.

THROUGH OTHER DANGERS.

When the old couple reached the shelter of the wood without being noticed by the dragoons, they turned to peer out along the road, as the old man gasped forth:

"Mercy on me, but are they not brave beings, my sweet young friend?"

The pretended old woman drew her breath as she glanced eagerly along the road, and then replied:

"They are the bravest men I ever beheld, Carlo, but I fear that they will be taken yet."

"Not they, young lady, if they follow the road. They are cutstripping the tyrants now, and they will reach the plains beyond before the alarm can be given to the Austrians on the other side of the river."

"I hope in heaven they may," gasped the old woman, who was no other than Christine Ballou in disguise.

The brave young girl would not consent to remain behind in the mountain after her two American friends, and she had planned with Carlo during the day to accompany them disguised as a couple of old Italian peasants.

Carlo had secured the horse and cart during the day in the village, and he had also made arrangements with the tavern-keeper to aid the whole party in the dangerous movement.

Carlo and the young lady watched the pursuit until the dragoons were out of sight, and the latter then turned to her young friend, saying:

"What can we do now, Carlo?"

"We must push on to the river on foot, young lady, as you see the dragoons are leading the horse back to the tavern."

"Let us push on then, my brave young friend, and I trust in goodness that we will hear of their safety when we reach the river."

"It is four miles at least, young lady, and we will have to keep on to the fields after we pass on through the woods."

"Let us away on the journey, then, and I can only pray that we will not encounter that hateful Count Claude again this evening."

The young couple then dashed on through the woods as fast as they could walk, keeping as near to the road as possible.

In the meantime, Captain Columbia and his gallant young friend dashed along the road on the good steeds with the dragoons following on behind them.

Carlo was surprised to see the friends riding steadily along the road as it was, and only caring for the safety of the other in front of them.

Knowing the steeds well enough of their prowess, the two friends rode on at a rapid pace until they struck the village near the river.

The steeds dashed as they dashed forward, and then the road led down to the bank of the river.

It was nearly quite dark, and as the young Americans started on, they could perceive that the road led all along on the bank of the river.

"How far do you think off Captain Columbia, as he has dashed for a mile, and then down with the horse?"

"As you are, captain," was the only answer from the gallant young friend.

The young friend then called out to his friend to stop, and then the two reached the bank of the river.

"I am afraid you will be in trouble."

"I am afraid you will be in trouble."

scarcely heard when each of the riders slipped from their saddles, still grasping the bridles.

The current was running strong at the time, and the animals were borne down some distance before their pursuers appeared on the bank above them.

About twelve of the dragoons plunged into the stream, Count Claude leading the way, as he cried:

"Ride over the bridge, some of you, and give the alarm there to head them off, as I now believe we have to deal with those two rascally Americans from Genoa, and they must not reach the French camp alive."

Captain Columbia heard the words as he was nearing the opposite bank, and he turned to his young friend with a grim smile, as he said to him:

"The Italian rogue has discovered us at last, and now our real perils begin."

"We will laugh at him to the end," responded David Peterson, as his horse touched ground.

Captain Columbia was before him on the bank, and he held his steed in hand until his friend was by his side, when he said:

"We will dash along down the bank and keep as far away from the main line of the Austrians as possible."

"As you say, captain. The bridge is up the stream, and the Austrians may not have extended their lines toward this point yet."

The two friends then dashed on together, taking a path through a wood not very far from the river.

They could soon hear the Austrian dragoons riding along after them, while Count Claude cried aloud:

"Ride on with all haste, and I promise fifty gold pieces to the soldier who will strike down either of the accursed wretches."

Count Claude and his men kept close on after them, yelling like so many fiends in the hope of attracting the Austrian cutpurses in the neighborhood.

The two brave friends urged on their horses still faster as they saw an opening through the trees, and they soon found themselves on an open plain, which they supposed was the extreme right of the Austrian lines.

"Urge on your horse now and keep to the right," said Captain Columbia, as he perceived several camp-fires blazing to the left.

The gallant fugitives rode along the plain, keeping close to the wood, when they were startled by cries in front of them, followed by several shots.

Then out from the wood to the right rode a large party of dragoons, while up from the plain on the other side sprang several small parties of foot soldiers to oppose their progress in that direction.

Captain Columbia cast one glance across the plain, as if to calculate his chances in a dash through his foes, but he saw at once that it would be madness to make such an attempt, and he turned to his friend, saying:

"We cannot ride through the Austrian lines while the alarm is ringing out, and we must to the wood again."

At that moment the gallant young fugitives turned their horses once more and dashed into the wood, Captain Columbia crying in Italian:

"Wretch of a traitor, we defy you to the end, and long live Italy!"

CHAPTER XII.

BACKWARD AND FORWARD.

The two young Americans had soon passed the wood and had started forward, and they were but a short distance off their position on that night of the 10th of November.

An attempt to move forward through the open plain would be certain death or capture, as the dragoons were but a mile off, and the only chance was to pass through the wood, but the two friends were not yet quite out of the wood.

The two friends were soon far on the other side of the wood, as they were approaching the bank of the river, in full force, with the last of their strength, and Captain Columbia, fearing he could not hold out much longer, called out to his friend:

"The strength which was to be in me is gone, and it is now only the strength of the spirit which is left."

"The strength which was to be in me is gone, and it is now only the strength of the spirit which is left."

But we are forestalling events, and we must now turn to the gallant young adventurers who dashed into the wood with Count Claude and his friend in pretty close pursuit.

They had scarcely gained the shelter of the wood when Captain Columbia turned to his companion, saying:

"We will make right back for the river again."

"I understand you, my friend," was David Peterson's only reply, as he pressed on beside his companion.

They soon struck on a cow-path leading down to the river, and they dashed along on the soft earth, while on behind them, and to the right and left of them, thundered their vigorous pursuers, while out through the wood and over the plain behind rang out the cry:

"Look out for the French spies coming from the rear."

Count Claude and his men led in the backward hunt, and they soon struck on the cow-path also.

The two gallant fugitives were about a hundred yards ahead at the moment, and the fierce and treacherous Italian could catch a glimpse of them as they dashed down and into the rushing river as he cried:

"Press after them!" he yelled, "and take them alive, if possible."

The Italian was then confident that the fugitives were the two French officers who had defied him so bravely in their flight from Genoa, and he felt certain that they were bearing important dispatches to the French general.

The dragoons under Count Claude beheld the fugitives also, and they sent forth cries that attracted the Austrians in the wood on the bank of the river.

Fortunately for Captain Columbia and his brave friends, a cloud overspread the moon at the time, and as they struck out into the river, their forms were not very clear to the yelling enemy on the bank.

After they were well out in the river, with the Austrians in close pursuit, Captain Columbia said to Peterson: "Let your horse go on and we will swim to yonder bank and hide in the woods. The Austrians will follow the horses down the river and we will fool them."

This they did and Count Claude and his followers were baffled.

After searching for our friends and finding the horses, but not their riders, the Austrians gave up the chase.

Count Claude then led his troops back, and on his way he made up his mind to search the village through which the fugitives had passed.

By moving to the left, they struck on a road that enabled them to gain the village without being obstructed by the high wall before mentioned.

The streets were deserted as the dragoons dashed in, but Count Claude perceived a light in a small tavern.

Riding toward it, he said to his men:

"We will refresh man and beast here, and keep on the lookout for the spies."

Dashing up to the door of the tavern the count sprang from his horse and strode into the place, as he cried aloud:

"Arouse yourselves here and give us wine and food as quick as possible."

At that moment his eyes fell on an old couple seated in a corner, and he darted on them with a cry of joy, as he exclaimed:

"You vile old wretches, I will punish you for your treachery this evening."

The brute struck at the old man as he spoke and felled him on the floor, while the pretended old woman cried out in alarm:

"Oh, do not murder him, you cruel wretch."

Count Claude stared at the pretended woman for a moment, also with glaring eyes, and then he sprang at her and clutched her by the arms as he exclaimed in joyous tones:

"By all that's fortunate this is her! than I say, 'tis!"

Count Claude had betrayed himself in that moment of excitement, as he spoke in his natural tones on seeing Carlo tell off to the door by the brutal count.

The young lady from Genoa had learned a secret of the count's mind, which tended to increase her interest in the conduct of the brutal act, and she knew that when Count Claude said, "How he was striking a fair young fellow just now and I was saving him by a timely blow," he was referring to Captain Columbia.

In other words, Carlo was a young man, and so was the Captain of Captain Columbia.

Another cry of dismay burst from Christine, but it was the friend of Carlo in the grip of the cruel count, who tore the cry from her lips, as he continued to cry in jubilant tones:

"And is you a wretch trying to kick your dear friend? And

who is this old wretch who is now with you, my beloved young lady?"

The disguised Italian girl who had been knocked on the floor sprang to her feet at the moment, and drawing a dagger from her breast she sprang on the count as she hissed forth:

"Treacherous wretch, I am one who will avenge my country on you."

As the brave maiden spoke, she aimed a fierce thrust at the count; but an Austrian dragoon caught her arm at the moment from behind, and flung her to the floor again, while Count Claude cried:

"Seize the old wretch, and we will soon make an example of him!"

Several of the dragoons sprang into the tavern at the moment and made a rush at Carlo, as we will continue to call the young Italian maiden.

Casting one hateful glance at the count, the disguised girl started for the back door, evading the dragoons as she hissed forth:

"I will live to slay you yet, traitor, and to rescue that dear young lady from your vile grasp."

The dragoons started out of the back door after the disguised girl, while Count Claude forced Christine down on a chair as he said to her in savage, yet joyous tones:

"You see that it is useless to struggle against me, as you are destined to be my fair bride."

"Never!" gasped the fair girl. "Oh, I do hope that my dear friend has escaped."

The disguised daughter of the Italian outlaw was as vigorous and as active as any young mountaineer in Italy.

Having shared her father's fortune on the hills, and having braved many dangers in his company, she was not at all alarmed when the Austrian dragoons dashed out after her from the tavern.

Being well acquainted with the neighborhood, Carlo sprang to the right on reaching the yard behind the tavern, and then darted over a wall before the heavy dragoons could lay hands on him.

The dragoons stared up at the wall, and then one of them turned to the tavern again with a grunt, saying:

"We cannot fly over that."

On reporting the escape to Count Claude, the latter cried, in a rage:

"Then out through the village and search for him. One of you hasten down to the river and give the alarm to those on the other side, as I verily believe the French spies are concealed somewhere around us now."

The dragoons hastened out to search on all sides, while Count Claude called on the landlord to supply him and the young lady with wine and food.

Christian saw that the wretch was determined not to leave her side for a moment, as she said to herself:

"I pray that poor Carlo has escaped, and I cannot believe that Captain Columbia and his friend have been taken prisoners."

Count Claude attempted to make himself agreeable while the landlord was preparing the refreshments, but the proud girl repelled him each time, saying:

"I despise you too much to be courteous to you. You may kill me, but you will never conquer me."

A grim smile would then pass over the traitor's face, and he would reply, saying:

"Proud maidens have been tamed ere now, and I will tame you ere long."

While thus engaged, Count Claude did not forget the two young Americans, as he gave the particular instructions to some of his dragoons to search for them.

The landlord delayed some time in providing the refreshments ordered by the count, and the latter became impatient as he cried:

"Dog of a landlord, I will put you to death if you do not hasten to serve us."

"It is coming, sir," cried the landlord, in agitated tones, speaking from a side room, where he was engaged in earnest conversation with the bright-faced lad, who was no other than Carlo.

A few minutes after the landlord entered with the refreshments, the boy followed him, bearing two bottles of wine.

Count Claude was glaring at the landlord at the moment, when Carlo had just made a slight start and by the young lady's side he had turned and appeared before her.

"I am here to serve you, sir," said the young lady and the landlord to the count, Carlo remarked.

"I am here to serve you, lady, and to reward the soldier."

Count Claude turned suddenly on the lad and glared

fiercely at him before he turned to the landlord, and demanded in suspicious tones:

"Who is that boy?"

"That is my son, sir."

The count cast another suspicious glance at Carlo, as he growled forth:

"I have seen the young rascal somewhere before, and I believe he is a follower of that bandit wretch who is called Bianco."

The landlord shook his head in the most positive manner, and replied:

"I can swear to you, good sir, that my son has never been on the mountain with the famous robber who is known as Bianco."

The boy stared back at the count in the most unblushing manner, and then proceeded to pour out his wine, as he remarked:

"The captain is mistaken. I have never seen Captain Bianco, but I have heard that he comes of a noble family, and that he has been much injured by his half-brother, who is known as Count Claude."

The count winced a little under the rebuke, and then turned and whispered to Christine, saying:

"I will punish the impudent young wretch before I leave here."

The young lady cast a scornful glance at the traitor, as she replied:

"The boy is repeating what is the common report, and it is only too true."

The boy under suspicion moved to the door of the tavern at the moment, and cast a glance around in search of the dragoons, as he muttered to himself:

"If the wine fails me I must try the dagger again, yet I do hate to play the assassin, even on such a vile wretch."

The count was about to raise the wine to his lips, but he lowered the glass, saying:

"Your wine may be weak, dear lady, but it will be all the stronger that you have tasted it, and we will exchange glasses."

Without waiting for the young woman's consent the vile wretch seized her glass and raised it to his lips, as he cried:

"To our future happiness!"

A low groan burst from Carlo as he turned and perceived the act, while he clenched his hands and muttered to himself in bitter tones:

"The suspicious dog suspects me, and I only pray now that the dear young lady will be as suspicious as he is of the wine."

Christine Dillon was a very clever young lady, and as she had taken the hint given her by her brave young friend, she pushed the count's wine away in an indignant manner, saying:

"I will not drink from the glass that you have held in your hand."

A mocking laugh burst from the suspicious man, and he seized the discarded wine and handed it to the landlord, crying:

"Let your son drink that, or I will force it down his throat at the point of my sword."

Carlo heard the threat, and he advanced on the instant with a smiling face, crying:

"I will drink the wine with pleasure."

Taking the glass from his pretended father, the youth raised it to his lips, while he kept his eyes on the count, as he remarked:

"Your good health, captain."

Then, clinking the glass on the instant, he flung its contents in the face of the traitor, as he bellowed forth in venomous language:

"What a traitor you are!"

The count sprang to his feet, rubbing the wine from his face, and Carlo seized one of the bottles and struck him on the head with it, as he yelled:

"I will not be all traitor!"

The count had scarcely struck the count, when he seized Carlo by the arm and dragged her toward the door, crying:

"I will not let you go!"

The count and Carlo stood at the same instant, and Claude drew his sword and a pistol at the same time, and staggered toward the door as he yelled out:

"The count is here!"

Both of the dragoons were standing outside the tavern, and Carlo led Christine to one of them in great haste,

assisting her to the saddle as he whispered into her ear, saying:

"A ride for life and death, dear lady. Follow me, and I will guide you to a ford down the stream."

Springing on another horse Carlo led the way through the village street, while Count Claude dashed after them on foot, and attempted to fire his pistol at them, as he yelled:

"To the rescue, Austrians. The spies are escaping with our horses."

As the powder in the pistol was damp it would not go off, and the infuriated count saw his late prisoners dashing along the road taken by himself and his friends on the way up from the river bank.

As the Austrian dragoons were scattered over the village nearer to the river, the two brave girls were not molested in the flight.

Along the road they dashed at full speed, and it was some time before the dragoons could mount to ride in pursuit of them.

On gaining a point nearly opposite to where the two young Americans were lying concealed, Carlo led the way into the river, as he said:

"My dear young lady, we may be in some danger on the other side, yet I think I can guide you safely around the Austrian lines."

Captain Columbia and his friend, from their place of concealment, could perceive the two riders crossing the ford.

As they drew near the former said:

"On my life, I know that figure, and it is our young friend Carlo."

CHAPTER XIII.

ON TO THE FRENCH CAMP.

Keeping still concealed in the bushes, the two friends stared out at the young maidens crossing the ford, while Captain Columbia said in low tones:

"I am certain that it is Carlo, but who can the other be?"

When Count Claude discovered Christine in the tavern, the rough wretch tore an old cap from her head, but did not otherwise effectually remove her disguise.

The fair young girl still wore a gray head-piece over her front hair, her countenance was disfigured with dye stuff, and the hood of her cloak was drawn over her head as she crossed the ford with the other disguised maiden.

As they drew near the bank, Captain Columbia recognized the old woman, who was in company with the old peasant, in assisting them from the tavern where they had first encountered Count Claude that evening, and he turned to his friend, saying:

"It is the old woman of the cart, but I cannot understand why Carlo is with her here."

The presence of Carlo gave David Peterson a certain inspiration, and a pleasant smile passed over his face, as he replied:

"On my honor, I think our eyes have not been very sharp this evening."

"How is that, David?"

"Address them when they land, and we may discover something."

The two disguised maidens soon struck the bank near where the two friends were concealed, when a familiar voice fell on their ear, saying:

"Good Carlo, a friend is near, and he would speak with you."

Each of the young maidens recognized the voice on the instant, and a cry of joy escaped from Christine, as she exclaimed:

"They were not taken prisoners."

The brave maiden forgot the part she was playing, and she spoke in her natural tones.

Captain Columbia uttered a cry of joy also as he sprang out to embrace the disguised maiden, lifting her from the horse as he exclaimed:

"What a joyous meeting! Yet I deplore that you did not remain on the mountain, my dear young lady, as we are in the midst of dangers yet."

Turning a sly glance on Carlo, who had also dismounted, Christine replied:

"We have come safe so far, though we did encounter some dangers."

David Peterson appeared to his friends also, and he looked earnestly at Carlo as he inquired:

"Was it possible that you were the old man who assisted us so well, Carlo?"

The disguised Italian girl held down her head as if to hide her blushes as she replied:

"Yes, I was the old man. We had both resolved on seeing you safe in the French camp, and you cannot drive us back now."

Captain Columbia was conversing with Christine in low and earnest tones, and he then turned to the pretended Italian boy, saying:

"The young lady here intimates that you can guide us on all right to the plains of Marengo, where the French are encamped."

"I hope to do so," was the prompt response from the pretended boy.

The young men had not the least suspicion as to the real sex of the brave Italian girl, and Christine was sworn not to betray her.

After consulting for some time, while they kept moving down the bank of the stream in the most cautious manner, it was agreed to make the attempt at reaching the French camp as soon as possible.

Captain Columbia would have preferred to leave the two horses behind them, but he felt that Christine must be weary, and it was resolved that the young lady and the pretended boy should mount again for the journey.

All their movements during the night had been so hurried that two hours had not elapsed since they left the village where they had first encountered Count Claude in the dusk of the evening.

Yet how many strange and thrilling adventures had they all passed through in that brief time!

While Captain Columbia noticed, as he walked by Christine's side, that Carlo appeared to cling to David Peterson more than ever that night during their journey along the river, yet he did not attribute it to the real cause.

Before taking to the mountains with her father two years ago, the young girl had moved in the best society, and she was intelligent and accomplished as well as devoted and brave.

After they had moved along for some miles, Carlo insisted on dismounting so that David could take her place on the horse as she said:

"I can find the path I seek more readily on foot, and you must be tired, young sir."

Captain Columbia heard the words and he remarked in subdued tones:

"That will be best, David, and I think it will be wise for one of us to advance a little ahead with the brave boy."

Christine objected to the proposition at once, saying:

"Do not let us part again to-night, dear friends, even for a moment."

"Your word is law," replied the gallant young American.

Carlo then sprang from the horse and moved on some yards in advance until he struck the path he was in search of.

The four friends then pushed on through the woods in the direction in which they feared that the Austrians may have followed them to the right in the meantime.

It was the joy of all when they struck out on the plain to the right, when they could perceive the camp-fires of the French troops encamping only within two miles of them on the right.

Then away in front, with small hamlets and farm-houses intervening, appeared the camp-fires of the French.

On reaching the plain, David Peterson insisted on Carlo mounting the horse again, when Captain Columbia laughingly said, "I am not so bad,"

"The animal is strong and he can well bear the two of you."

"That is a hint for yourself," retorted David, as he cast a glance at the lady on horseback.

Christine was a merry creature in her way, and she felt very happy at the prospect as she joyously responded, saying:

"I would be glad indeed to have my brave friend ride behind me on the steed, as he appears to be a strong animal, and we can make good time."

"Then we will do just that," cried Captain Columbia, in glee, as he sprang up behind the fair lady.

"I will follow suit," responded David as he mounted the steed, and the young Italian maid, and put his arms around her waist, but she fearing that he was clasping the girl who loved him at the moment.

They had not proceeded far in that fashion when they were suddenly startled by a cry in the wood behind them, followed by the trampling of horse-hoofs, and the sound of a voice which had become familiar to them in its roar, as it thundered:

"We are on them low, and death to me if they escape us this time."

Each and all of the fugitives recognized that voice, and they urged the two horses on to their full speed, for the time, while Captain Columbia and his friend glared back as if to number their foes.

"About seven of them in all," remarked Captain Columbia to his friend.

"I can count but six," was the calm response from David Peterson.

The friends were then silent for some moments, but they were not idle in thought or act, as they were both examining the holsters in search of weapons.

"I find two large pistols here," remarked Captain Columbia.

"I find but one," responded David, "but we have our swords."

Casting a glance back, Captain Columbia noticed that the pursuers were gaining on them, and he said to the lady in front of him:

"You and Carlo must ride on to the French camp at full speed and we will dismount and give battle to our enemies, dear lady."

"No, no," pleaded Christine. "I insist on it that we will not part again, though death may await us all. The wretch behind us will hot fire on us, while I am with you, I am certain."

"And I insist on remaining also," said Carlo, "as I can use a weapon."

The two young Americans were silent for some moments, while they kept urging on the horses at their best speed, casting glances to the front and to the rear, as if to count their chances of escaping.

Count Claude led the pursuit, and a cry of exultation burst from him every now and again, as he perceived that he was fast gaining on the fugitives, while he would turn and urge on his men, saying:

"Spur on to the fastest pace, and we will soon be on them."

The two young Americans could perceive that the pursuers were fast gaining on them, and that it would be almost impossible to strike the French lines in advance with the steeds bearing their double load.

At that moment Count Claude and his friends were not more than twenty yards behind, and their steeds were gaining on the fugitives at every stride.

"We must face around very soon in any case," said Captain Columbia, "and it is necessary for us to have our arms free in the struggle."

The words were scarcely uttered when several pistol-shots rang out on the night air, and the fugitives' steeds reeled along as if wounded.

Captain Columbia felt the horses staggering under him, and he sprang to the ground, saying, clasping Christine in his arms at the same time:

"Run along now, my dear young lady, and we will remain to defend you."

Christine did retreat a few steps, when she perceived David Peterson and Carlo springing from their wounded steeds, both animals falling to the ground at the same time.

With pistol and sword in hand the two gallant Americans turned on their foes and advanced a few steps to meet them, Captain Columbia crying:

"We will fight to the death now and we will protect the dear lady. Fire, David, and aim at the trooper to the right."

Both of the young friends fired on the instant, and two troopers fell from their horses, the steeds rushing on toward the four friends.

"Secure the horses, Carlo," yelled Captain Columbia, as he kept advancing to fire again.

Then down on the plain fell another of the dragoons, while Carlo sprang toward the flying horses, as he cried to Christine:

"All we in securing the horses, dear lady, and we can use the pistols in the holsters."

When David Peterson fired his last pistol he made a dash for one of the flying steeds, and sprang on his back, as he cried:

"Secure a horse, brave friend, and we will fight to better advantage."

Captain Columbia fired once again, and he then dashed the empty pistol at Count Claude, as he cried:

"We will defeat you yet, you dog of a traitor!"

The empty pistol struck the treacherous count on the forehead as he fell from his steed with a groan.

David Peterson dashed on at the other troopers, striking right and left, as he cried:

"Victory is ours!"

Captain Columbia sprang on Count Claude's steed and dashed to the assistance of his valiant friend.

At that moment a loud shout was heard to the left, and the

two Austrian soldiers, and a party of Austrian dragoons dashing over the plain toward them.

Making a final effort, the gallant young fellows struck at the remaining Austrians before them, down on the ground they fell, their steeds dashing away over the plains.

Casting one glance around him, Captain Columbia perceived that Carlo and Christine had secured two of the runaway horses a short distance behind them, and he turned his steed toward the French camp as he cried to his friend:

"Now for a last gallop for life and for the dear young lady."

As the two friends dashed along to the young maiden's side they perceived Count Claude lying on the ground as if dead, and Captain Columbia cried:

"The wretch is punished at last! and the dear young lady is safe from his intrigues hereafter."

The two leaders were already seated on the captured steeds as their friends rode back to them, and Christine joyously cried:

"Dear, brave friends, I trust that you will be repaid for your devotion to-night."

"On to the French camp," cried Captain Columbia, "and I think we are safe now."

As the four friends rode away together, Count Claude raised his head and glared after them as he hissed forth:

"I intended doing, I will have my revenge, and my bride if I have to follow you into the French camp."

CHAPTER XIV.

BONAPARTE BEFORE THE GREAT BATTLE.

It was night on the plains of Marengo, and General Bonaparte was taking his usual rounds through the camps, encouraging his troops to daring deeds in the strife on the morrow.

The famous general of the French was still a young man at the time, although he had achieved a world wide fame as a commander and a lawmaker.

He had advanced toward the end of his own camp, and he was gazing away to the Austrian lines when he heard a slight commotion, and he turned to one of his aids, saying:

"Who comes this way?"

Another officer hastened through the camp at the moment, until he stood before the young commander and saluted him, saying:

"General, four strangers have just arrived in camp from the Austrian lines, and one of them claims to be an officer from General Massena."

"From Genoa?" questioned Bonaparte.

"From Genoa, general," replied the officer.

"Then I will see him at once."

The officer gave a signal, and Captain Columbia, followed by his three companions, advanced toward General Bonaparte.

The four friends were glad to see as they crept through the Italian lines, and it was discovered that Captain Columbia and his friend David were dressed as Austrian peasants.

Captain Columbia advanced and stood before General Bonaparte, saluting him respectfully as he said, in French:

"General Bonaparte, my name is Columbia, and I come from Genoa with a message to you from General Massena."

General Bonaparte started slightly on hearing the name, and he bent his head to look on the discomfited youths in inquiry:

"Is it possible that you are the gallant Captain Columbia who served I when me in Egypt?"

The brilliant young American bowed and smiled, as he replied:

"I am the person, general, and I hope that you will recognize me when I have washed the dye from my face."

He raised his hand on the instant, the French general replied in French:

"I am glad to see my gallant American friend, and we will speak on this in private."

He led the young American away to his own camp, where the latter reported:

"I am glad to see the gallant American friend, with you and your friend David, of the rebellion, in which you have been engaged."

"What is the rebellion?"

"The rebellion of the Austrians against the Italian."

He paused a little on hearing the name, and then replied in French:

"I am glad to see the Italian now, and I am glad to see that I have been freed from the rebellion."

One of his aides, and the latter turned at once to conduct Christine and her two friends to a private tent near that of his general's.

When the French general and the brave young American reached the tent, the latter at once proceeded to place the dispatch from Massena before Bonaparte.

The French general read it carefully and smiled in approval as he remarked:

"Massena is a brave man and he is fighting nobly for France."

The great general then hastened to make some inquiries concerning the movements of the Austrian troops, to all of which Captain Columbia replied in clear and prompt tones.

"I am assured, general," responded Captain Columbia, "that all the divisions of the Austrian armies in Italy, except those engaged at Lodi and the other fortresses, are now marching to oppose you here on the plains of Marengo."

Napoleon Bonaparte bent his head on his breast to ponder the moments in silence before he spoke again.

"Then I have been misinformed, and I must hasten to repair the errors I have committed. I cannot thank you enough to you now, my brave Captain Columbia, but you will not be forgotten if victory comes on our side to-morrow."

The French general then sent messengers away in hot haste to summon troops to his aid, and in a few hours he arrived three days before, to cut off the Austrian retreat.

After Christine and her friends had rested for about an hour in the tent, they were escorted back to a village behind the town of Marengo.

Captain Columbia and his young American friend accompanied the young lady at the time, but they left them soon after to take lodgings in another house in the village.

The two young friends received appointments on the staff of one of Napoleon's bravest generals, and they were to report as early as possible on the following morning.

As they were weary after their long and dangerous journey, they did not awaken on the following morning until the booming of the cannon fell on their ears announcing that the great battle of Marengo had commenced.

Springing from their beds and dressing themselves in hot haste, the two young friends hastened to mount their horses, Captain Columbia saying:

"We will but stop to inquire after the young lady, David, and then we will away to report."

Great was the astonishment and dismay of the two young Americans on reaching the house where they had left Christine and Carlo, to learn that the young lady and her friend had departed from there two hours before.

"Let them not leave the village," said David, and Captain Columbia, in some surprise.

"Not a word," answered the woman of the house.

Captain Columbia then turned to his friend, saying: "I fear there is some treachery in this, my friend, and would that we had not to report until we could investigate a little."

The sounds of conflict grew louder and louder at the time, and David responded, saying:

"We are soldiers, captain, and we must hasten to the fray."

At that moment Carlo burst into the house, his young face blazing with excitement as he cried:

"Oh, my good friends, the wretch has taken away the lady again."

"What wretch?" demanded Captain Columbia.

"Count Claude," answered the pretended boy. "A man came here from you a few hours ago, calling on us to turn back to you, and we went with him without suspecting treachery. When we were some distance back, and away from the French soldiers, Count Claude and three rascals, all dressed as peasants, sprang out and seized us. We were then hurried along to the right on horseback, and I saw that we were making a detour to reach the Austrian camp."

"May the fiends take that wretch," hissed Captain Columbia. "Proceed, boy, and tell us how you escaped, as we must hasten to the front."

An orderly dashed along the village at the moment, and when he perceived Captain Columbia standing at the door of the cottage he pulled up and inquired:

"Are you Captain Columbia, sir?"

"I am."

"Then General Bonaparte has sent me to summon you, as he requires your services."

The two friends then rode away after the orderly, and the young Italian girl started after them as she hurried to the camp.

"I will be in front of battle to-day, and I will be there and go with him if I can."

CHAPTER IV.

ADVENTURES ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

Captain Columbia was fearfully mortified at the thought of Count Claude penetrating into the French lines and bearing away the beautiful young lady in whose behalf they had passed through so many wonderful adventures, and he fervently prayed that something would stop the storm of battle still raging on the Plains of Marengo, so that he could go off in quest of Christine Ballou.

The morning was well advanced as they dashed on after the aide toward the town of Marengo, which was situated near the center of the vast plain, and which was then held by the French.

In front of that town and away over the plain toward the river Bormida the Austrian lines extended, while heavy reinforcements were moving across two bridges in their rear.

Napoleon and his generals stood on a slight elevation near the town when the two young Americans rode on the battlefield, and the French general was anxiously watching the movements of the enemy at the moment.

Captain Columbia and his friend drew up about a hundred yards from the party to a halt, and the former cast his eyes over the vast plain as he turned to David Peterson, saying:

"The Austrians have the best of the play so far, and I fear that Bonaparte will have his hands full to-day."

"The Austrians are in splendid positions and they are moving on all sides, but believe me that Napoleon Bonaparte is not asleep and he will checkmate them yet."

The young men were attracted at the moment by a movement almost in front of them, as they could perceive strong bodies of the Austrians moving toward the small town of Marengo, and the most instant joints joined by the French.

Napoleon Bonaparte beheld the same movement at the same time, and he cast his eyes to the right and to the left before he cried:

"Victor must hold the town."

General Victor, one of the bravest men in the French army, was in command of the troops holding the town of Marengo, and Bonaparte dispatched a messenger to him on the instant, bidding him hold the town against the Austrians till he came to the assault.

While the aide was dashing away toward the town an overpowering force of Austrians pushed against it, sweeping the French back for the time.

The gallant General Victor rallied his troops, however, and held his ground, fighting desperately against very superior numbers.

Then a fearful struggle ensued in aid around the town, and Napoleon ordered reinforcements under the gallant Lannes to march to General Victor's aid.

Even then the French were compelled to fall back from the town, but they rushed back to the charge again and again, and succeeded in retaking the place three times.

In the meantime the Austrians were rushing on the right and left lines of the French in great force, and they fought with a courage never before surpassed by those who had followed Napoleon Bonaparte.

The two young Americans kept their post near Napoleon Bonaparte, and were both impatient to take an active part in this fierce struggle.

They could then turn their eyes toward the famous French general, who was sitting like a statue on his war horse, his sword in his hand, and giving orders to his troops in tones which had rung out over the plain for years.

"They are fighting gloriously," remarked Captain Columbia, "and they are doing all for their country."

"They are indeed admirable, indeed," responded David Peterson, "now as if they would gain the day, and with a faith in the star of Napoleon."

Very soon a large force of the Austrian cavalry appeared on the right of Marengo, charging on the French lines.

The French retreated before the cavalry only to form again in a stand, but the Austrian musketry in front pushed them back with great energy and gallantry, and Marengo was in

danger again. The French renewed the attack of every part of the plain, and their reserves of cavalry dashed

across the bridges and attacked the right of the French position with such fury and rapidity that it was thrown into complete disorder.

The general movement of the Austrians was successful on all sides.

The left line of the French was routed also, the center was penetrated and forced to fall back, and total defeat stared Napoleon Bonaparte in the face for the first time in his glorious career.

It is true that the French commander was then collecting his reserves, and he was not totally dismayed by the disaster that appeared to overwhelm his army.

He still kept his position on the plain, surrounded by about two hundred grenadiers of the guard and some of his officers, while behind him stood a small but compact body of those veterans, to cover the retreat and to save the defeated troops from a precipitate flight.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the Austrians were completely victorious on the plains of Marengo, and it required but the combined charge of their immense cavalry force to turn that victory into a fearful rout on the part of the French.

At that critical moment Napoleon Bonaparte received word that General Desaix was marching to his aid with his division of fresh troops.

The Austrians were so confident of victory that their aged commander, the brave General Melas, retired from the field, leaving the second in command to finish the glorious day's work.

And it was a glorious day's work for the Austrians up to that point.

Rallying his guards around him, however, Napoleon Bonaparte made another stand beyond the town of Marengo, while the fresh troops under Desaix marched on the plain at the double quick.

The arrival of the fresh troops served to animate the beaten French, and Napoleon rode from line to line crying:

"My friends, you have retreated far enough, and remember that I am in the habit of sleeping on the field of battle."

The burning words swept from rank to rank, those who were flying halted and formed again, and the charge was sounded along the whole length of the French lines.

The two young Americans followed Napoleon and his guard as he rode along the line until the French troops rallied again and the general order rang out for a combined advance on the Austrians.

Deeming victory safe in their grasp, the Austrians did not pursue the retreating French with great vigor, and intense was their surprise on finding their beaten foes arrayed against them again.

Under the eyes of their hitherto invincible chief the French were burning to wipe out the disgrace of the day, and they rushed on the Austrians with tremendous fury.

From one length of the line to the other the French resumed the offensive, marching forward like madmen crazed with joy and excitement, and vowing on all sides to turn their defeat into a glorious victory.

The Austrians, on the other hand, were surprised at the unexpected turn of affairs, and they fell back in dismay before the fierce onslaught.

Napoleon Bonaparte was riding back to his original position after having put his troops in motion, when he perceived the two young Americans for the first time during the exciting day.

Motioning the two young friends to approach him, the French general addressed Captain Columbia, crying:

"We are not defeated yet, my brave American friends. Did you not inform me that you knew the route to the bridges of the Bormida?"

"We do, general," answered Captain Columbia, his face glowing at the prospect of taking part in the great struggle at hand.

"Then ride with General Kellermann, who is now about to assail the Austrian cavalry. When he has dispersed them he will ride on to the bridges to cut off the retreat of the enemy."

General Kellermann was a small man, but he was one of the bravest cavalry leaders in the French army.

At that very moment the little general swept along over the plain at the head of over two thousand splendid horsemen, and the two young Americans dashed toward him and joined him.

Captain Columbia and cried out, without stopping his headlong charger:

"Then on with me, brave gentlemen, and we will push for the bridges through the enemy's ranks."

Passing through two bodies of the French infantry moving to the charge at the time, General Kellermann led his men at a headlong dash right down against a strong body of Austrian cavalry advancing to meet him on the plain beyond Marengo.

And that was as glorious a charge as was ever made on the field of battle.

Striking the Austrian horsemen full in the front the French troopers under Kellermann pierced them through and through, cutting them down with great slaughter at every step.

Then on and on they rushed against the Austrian grenadiers commanded by General Zach, who was in charge of the Austrian army after the retirement of the old general who had so ably led his troops in the early victory.

Down went the grenadiers on all sides, General Zach was compelled to surrender, and his troops were left without a commander for the rest of the struggle.

But the gallant Kellermann was not then satisfied, as he still kept on in his victorious charge, dashing against another strong body of the Austrian cavalry who opposed him on the plain beyond.

The Austrians were hurled aside in fearful confusion, while on after Kellermann pressed the infantry under Desaix and Lannes, who were driving the hitherto victorious enemy before them at great slaughter.

The Austrian lines were broken on all sides in turn, and they were compelled to fall back in dire confusion toward the bridges over the Bormida, with the victorious French pressing them and cutting them down at every step.

The slaughter of the Austrians then became fearful indeed.

Their whole army was thrown into the utmost confusion, and even flight was cut off in that dreadful hour of defeat.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the Austrians could claim a magnificent victory over the hitherto invincible hero of France.

At six in the evening they felt all the horrors of a disastrous defeat, and the star of Napoleon was shining brighter than ever.

After dashing through three bodies of the enemy without receiving a single check, the gallant Kellermann kept on at the headlong charge, making direct for the bridges leading over that fatal river.

On after him pressed the infantry on the double quick, while to the right and to the left swept the French troops who had given way in the early part of the day.

When Kellermann neared the bridges the Austrians were crowding across them in utter dismay, and in among the confused mass dashed those remorseless dragoons, cutting and slashing all before them, until the clear waters of the river became red with the blood of the men and their horses.

During the whole of that gallant charge the two young Americans kept close beside the gallant Kellermann.

David Peterson was wild with excitement as he dashed along with his friend, but Captain Columbia was thinking of the fair young lady he loved so much, and he said to himself every now and again:

"The treacherous Italian has taken her to the rear, and we must push on to the rescue."

Cutting his way through one of the bridges the impetuous Kellermann still kept on in his dreadful career, spreading death and ghastly wounds at every stride.

Still on after him pressed other squadrons of the French in pursuit, while on after them marched the active infantry to share in the disastrous work around the bridges.

It was after seven o'clock that night when Kellermann halted his weary men within about two miles of the village where the two young Americans had encountered Count Claude on the previous evening.

The scattered Austrians were then flying on every side, but the French were weary after the dreadful fatigues and slayings of the day, and the pursuit was stayed for the night.

General Kellermann posted his men on each side of the road, and he was about to ride back to report to his general, when Captain Columbia addressed him, saying:

"Brave general, I have a request to make of you."

"What is it, my valiant aide? I will be only too happy to report your bravery to-day when I speak to our great general."

Captain Columbia then hastened to relate the capture of the young lady by the treacherous Italian, and he concluded by saying:

"I request that you will give me a small force of, say,

twenty of your gallant troopers to push on in pursuit of the wretch. I assure you that General Bonaparte is interested in the young lady."

The gallant little general pondered some moments with his head bent toward the ground, and he then looked up with a smile, saying:

"I cannot refuse you, Captain Columbia, as I have to thank you for being first at the bridge in pursuit of the enemy to-day."

In less than five minutes after Captain Columbia and his friend were dashing toward the village at the head of fifty French dragoons.

They had not proceeded very far when a young horseman ranged up beside the two friends without speaking a word.

The young man was dressed in the uniform of a French dragoon, and Captain Columbia had noticed him during the fearful charges toward the bridges.

As they were dashing along and nearing the village, David Peterson turned and stared at the young soldier, saying:

"My brave friend, I have to thank you for saving my life to-day, as I now remember that you disabled an Austrian dragoon when his descending sword was within an inch of my head. The mischief take me it if isn't our friend, little Carlo himself."

The disguised Italian girl turned her beaming eyes on the young American as she responded in pleasant tones, saying:

"And why should I not charge by your side and now ride with you to the rescue of the dear young lady? Will you permit me to move on ahead of you to the village?"

"With what object, Carlo?" demanded Captain Columbia, in kindly tones.

"I fear that the Austrians have not retreated beyond that point, and I would spy ahead."

The two friends called a halt and consulted together, when it was decided that the Italian boy should move on to the village ahead of them, and then return to report the state of affairs there.

Captain Columbia then turned to the pretended boy, saying:

"Your request is granted, Carlo, but it will not be well for you to move on in that costume."

The active girl sprang from her horse on the instant and hastened to change her disguise.

In less than five minutes after she bade her friends adieu for the moment, and ran along the road, saying:

"I am now a peasant boy, and I pray that I will soon bring you tidings of the dear young lady."

The two young Americans waited with great impatience, and an hour elapsed before the disguised girl appeared before them again, her eyes beaming with excitement, as she exclaimed:

"The wretch is in the village with a troop of Austrians, and the young lady is his prisoner."

"How many do the Austrians number?" eagerly inquired Captain Columbia.

The disguised girl cast a glance at the French troopers, as if to count their numbers, ere she replied, saying:

"They outnumber you two to one, but I can guide you so that you may surprise them."

"Then lead on, my brave boy, and we will hasten to the attack, if they are three to our one. Did you see the young lady?"

"I did, sir. She is in the tavern at this moment, and the wretch would retreat with her, but she is so weary and sick at heart that she cannot even raise her head to defy the traitor."

Captain Columbia sprang on his horse and drew his sword as he cried:

"We will punish the wretch and rescue the dear lady. Lead on, brave Carlo, and we will follow you."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOOM OF THE TRAITOR.

The treacherous Italian was seated in a bedroom of the tavern at the moment, and Christine Ballon was reclining on a sofa.

The beautiful young girl was as pale as death, and her eyes were closed as if she had not the power to open the lids at the time.

Count Claude was regarding her with a triumphant smile, as he remarked:

"It is useless to resist, my dear young lady, as you see that fate is against you."

A deep sigh was the only reply, and the traitor continued, saying:

"It is true that the French have defeated the Austrians to-day, but what does that matter to me? The Austrians will rally and drive the invaders back again and Genoa will be taken, and then I will recover your estates in Italy."

With a desperate effort the weary young lady raised her head and replied:

"Vile traitor, the French will continue their victorious march, and the Austrians will be driven from around Genoa and from Italy. Even now I feel that my brave friends will soon come to my rescue and that you will suffer a traitor's death."

A scornful smile passed over the Italian's face as he replied:

"You are but dreaming, dear lady. The French advance halted two miles to the rear, and my scouts report that they are camping there for the night. When you have rested an hour or so we will push on toward Genoa, and I swear to you that your American adventurer will never behold you again."

At that moment a dragoon appeared at the door and saluted Count Claude, saying:

"It is reported, captain, that the French dragoons in advance, are retreating toward the river again."

A joyous smile appeared on the face of the traitor, and he dismissed the dragoon before he turned to address the young lady again, saying:

"You now see that there is no hope of a rescue, and I beg of you to take some refreshments, so that you can come on with me."

The young lady sighed as she replied:

"And I beg that you will leave me in peace for the present, or you will be my death."

The wicked wretch cast another triumphant smile on his intended victim, and left the room, muttering to himself:

"She is thinking of that miserable young American, yet, and I must slay him before she will forget him."

Count Claude was descending the stairs to the barroom, when a loud shout fell on his ears, mingled with the stamping of horses and other sounds of strife and confusion.

Calling on his men to rally around him, he cried:

"If the French are on us, mount and retreat, as they must come in force. Out with my steed and a fleet horse for the lady."

The traitor then rushed back up the stairs again, dashed into the bedroom and raised the helpless young lady in his arms, crying:

"I will bear you away, though opposed by all the troopers in the French army."

Christine Ballou was too weary to resist, and the wretch bore her down stairs in a fainting condition.

The sounds of strife outside grew nearer and nearer as he bore her toward the front door of the tavern, and the Austrian troopers were giving way on all sides before the impetuous charge of the French dragoons.

Just as Count Claude reached the door of the tavern Captain Columbia appeared on horseback before him, and cried out in fierce tones:

"Dog of a traitor, release that young lady and defend yourself!"

The desperate Italian did place the young lady on the steps of the tavern, and calling on his men to rally around him at the same time, he drew his sword to face Captain Columbia, crying:

"To the death be it now!"

The brave young American sprang from his horse and rushed on his foe, sword in hand, as he responded, crying:

"To the death be it, then!"

With a roar and the bravest cry of all, with the French dragoons, at the same moment driving the Austrians back in the utmost confusion, while the two rivals engaged in a deadly struggle for life and love.

That struggle was of brief duration, however, as Captain Columbia had already crossed swords with the traitor when he entered the tavern with a deadly wound in his breast, crying:

"This is our last meeting on earth."

"And this perisus all traitors," cried Carlo, as he bent over the dead man.

Captain Columbia raised the insensible young lady in his arms and bore her into the tavern as he cried out:

"Carlo. Press on the foe, my brave friend."

Carlo did press on with the French dragoons, and a bullet sent flying from the village with

Carlo was bearing off the young lady when that wretched

suddenly drew a dagger and aimed a blow at the disguised girl, as he gasped forth:

"I know you now, Caroline, and I defy you and your father in death."

The brave girl warded off the blow aimed at her heart, but she received a severe wound on the arm, and she fell back, crying:

"The wretch would slay me, but he has not the power now."

Captain Columbia sprang at his prostrate enemy, and he was about to plunge his sword into his breast when he perceived that he was dead.

The gallant young American then hastened to the assistance of the pretended boy, and he was bending over him to examine the wound, when David Peterson rushed into the tavern, crying:

"Poor Carlo, and is he slain in serving us?"

The pretended girl smiled up at the young American, and replied, in gentle tones:

"I am not slain, my dear friends, as the wound is but slight."

Leaving David Peterson to tend to the wounded girl, Captain Columbia sprang to the side of the young lady again, and he soon succeeded in restoring her to consciousness.

When Christine Ballou fairly recovered her strength she drew Captain Columbia aside and whispered to him, saying: "I have a secret to tell you."

"What is it, my dear lady?"

"The boy known as Carlo is a young lady, and she is a daughter of the outlaw chief known as Captain Bianco. Her father was robbed of his estate by his half-brother, the wretch who is lying dead there now, and if the French are victorious in Italy she will be a rich heiress, indeed."

Captain Columbia was surprised at the information, yet he hastened to reply:

"This is wonderful news indeed, and it is possible that my friend David did not know it."

"I believe that he suspected it," answered Christine, "as you will perceive how he is embracing the dear creature now."

At that moment Captain Bianco himself strode into the tavern, and stared down at his dead brother for a moment ere he exclaimed:

"I am avenged at last, and I thank heaven I did not shed his blood!"

The outlaw then turned and embraced his daughter, who was clasped in the arms of the young American.

It was true that David Peterson had suspected the sex of his young friend, and he was rejoiced to find that the boy Carlo turned out to be a beautiful and accomplished young lady.

The main body of the cavalry commanded by Kellermann soon moved up and took possession of the village, and the two young Americans and their lady friends rested in peace that night.

Early on the following day General Bonaparte moved on in his victorious march, Genoa was relieved, and the Austrians were driven from that portion of Italy.

Christine Ballou and the wounded Italian maiden moved back to France as soon as possible, while their two American friends remained with the French army until peace was declared.

It is well known that the great battle of Marengo paved the way for Napoleon Bonaparte in assuming the imperial crown of France, as he was declared emperor very soon after.

As Captain Columbia and his young friend were devoted friends of freedom, they did not approve of Napoleon's ambition, while they could not help admiring the brilliant genius of the young Corsican.

Soon after Napoleon was declared emperor the two friends left Paris for their own prosperous land, but they did not travel alone.

Christine Ballou became the wife of the man known as Captain Columbia in France, but who had also a splendid reputation in his own country in his own name.

That name became famous in American history thereafter, and its owner ranked among the brightest statesmen in the American republic.

As David Peterson was very much attached to the fair Italian girl who had shared in their wonderful adventures, he also prevailed on her to become his wife, and they lived happily together in America.

Next week's issue will contain "THE YOUNG RIP VAN WINKLE." A Story of Adventure. By Richard R. Montgomery.

CURRENT NEWS

Jewelry establishments and other commercial concerns all over the country are erecting wireless masts over or close to their places of business to catch the officially correct time flashed at 10 o'clock every night from the navy's wireless station at Arlington, Va. Local jewellers who seized upon the idea have set the pace for other cities.

Two great icebergs, one hundred miles north of the transatlantic steamship lanes and moving southward, were discovered by the revenue cutter Seneca on April 13, according to a delayed wireless despatch to the revenue cutter service. One berg was in latitude 44°36' and longitude 49°09'. The other was eleven miles west of that position.

Eddie Smith, of the East Side, New York, broke his arm in the fourth round of a ten-round bout with Jimmy Flynn, of Long Island, at the Atlantic Garden Athletic Club, recently, and was forced to quit. The club's physician examined the injured boxer's arm and declared that it would be at least two months before he would be able to box again. Until he met with the accident Smith had all the better of the going. In the semi-final "Young" O'Leary had a slight advantage over Eddie Sherman.

E. Perry Hiers, of Rosemary Township, brought to Barnwell, S. C., on April 15, an eagle he caught with a hook while fishing recently. While in a boat looking after set lines Hiers observed the bird overhead, and he was just taking a fish off the line when the eagle swooped at the morsel. The hook caught the bird by the wing, and before it could free itself Hiers killed it with a paddle. The eagle measured 15 feet 9 inches from tip to tip. Its talons were placed on exhibition in a newspaper office here.

The pledge taken by the Boy Scouts of France offers a suggestion to the Boy Scouts of this country. They take a pledge never to speak ill of their country before strangers, and under any circumstances, when they have occasion to speak of French public life, "to discuss discreetly what is bad, to be silent about what is middling, and to extol what is good in French public life." The disposition in this country to be censorious and too often unjust critics of public officials, tends to lessen the respect for authority.

General Philip Neander, an inventor, the Manufacturer of the day, reported, April 15, that he might possibly sail into the Atlantic in commemoration of the anniversary of the Titanic disaster. Mr. Neander, who is a good friend of Harry B. Harris, the theatrical manager, has just returned from a vacation in Europe. He has a new boat for all the time he has to sail. He is the President of the National Association of Manufacturers. He has attended the meetings of the American

In the final hour and a half left by the United States Court the other morning for the filing of Titanic claims 125 demands for damages were handed to Commissioner Alexander Gilehrist. The whole number of claims filed is 910. A total of almost \$14,000,000 is sought from the White Star Line for loss of life, health and property through the sinking of the steamship. All claims not filed by the hour set were declared invalid, though Judge Holt allowed two exceptions. Henry Escher, counsel for seven Swiss immigrants, was granted an extension of thirty days. A. Leonard Brougham was allowed one week to file fifty claims.

Captain Wills of the British steamer Longstar, arriving the other day from Cetee, France, brought in what is said to be a message from the Titanic, which he picked up off the Grand Banks on his last transatlantic passage. Captain Wills said that the message, which was scratched with a nail on a piece of wood about a foot square, was signed by Colonel John Jacob Astor. What the nature of the message was the captain would not divulge. He said he had been in communication with Mrs. Astor and offered the relic to her, but that she had declined to receive it. Officers of the steamer believe the message is genuine, but shipping people placed very little credence in the theory that it came from the Titanic.

Six persons, including four employees of the Dillsburg Post Office, York, Penn., were poisoned by candy sent from Harrisburg the other night to the Postmaster, F. M. Altland. Mr. Altland and his daughter, Catharine, are confined to their beds. The others who partook of the candy and were made ill are Bailey Spohr and Robert Smith, carriers, and Helen Spohr and Maud Klugh, school children, who had received some of the candy from the postmaster's daughter. A box of homemade fudge was received by Postmaster Altland early this morning. He treated his daughter and the two carriers. His wife refused to eat any, becoming suspicious when she was told that the person who sent the candy was unknown. Detectives have been put to work on the case.

Captain J. Tutt of the Hamburg-American Line steamship Carl Schurz, which arrived from Cebu, reported at 11:33 A. M. on April 8 his vessel ran into a sleeping whale and killed it off the Colombian coast, between Santa Marta and Port Limon. Captain Tutt said the Schurz was moving at sixteen knots an hour when she struck with a shock that frightened many passengers. They thought the ship had run into another vessel or a sunken reef. The captain ordered the engines reversed and backed at full speed. In the bright moonlight the carcass of a forty-two foot whale was seen spitted on the bow of the ship. As the ship moved forward it ran into the whale again. Then the Schurz went on. Captain Tutt said the whale was striped on head and back.

THE GIRL HE LEFT BEHIND

THE HERO OF THE 7th

By J. P. RICHARDS.

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER V (continued.)

While they lived, that jolly, careless crowd never forgot that moonlight sail. Not one among them all had ever known a care, and with the exception of Dick Burnett, a serious thought. Unlike the other three young men he did not have a rich father, but was obliged to work for a living. He held a good paying position in New York, and was a general favorite in the regiment. He and Jack Navarro were firm friends, and had been for years.

The night was perfect, and the balmy breeze just strong enough to fill the sails and send the boat skimming along over the river's breast. And in the moonlight, a thousand silvery lights over all, and the glow of a thousand stars reflected in the water, the party was a-videring. There was laughter and song, mingled with the music of the guitar, and in each young heart there was still sweeter music—the sweet, entrancing music that is played upon the heart strings by the master hand of Love—the pure, true first love of youth.

Ah, happy youth! Ah, blessed first love! A score of years is the home heart capable of feeling the divine passion, but the love of later years is not the same. The soul of youth is in the heart, and it is in the heart alone.

A Claude Patten had just finished a tender love-song, and it must be admitted that she sang it well. Silence reigned, and each was thinking of the words that were

being repeated by others, when Eliza and Ruth heard Dorothy's clear, gay laugh, and Dick, Dorothy's playmate, said:

"Dorothy," he whistled softly, "has a new song."

"Dorothy, how true those words were. One need not see the light, fleecy foam upon the streamlet's breast, I hear the song of the wild-birds in—"

"Yes," she sighed, smiling sweetly as though lost in thought. "It was beautiful. The line about the foam on the streamlet's breast made me think of Chapman's 'Wife's Complaint.' And I thought of the old woman and her jewels."

"That's a funny couplet," said Dick to Freda, as he lay down. "A poor old woman—"

"Yes, it is," said Freda, smiling. "Poor old Chapman's wife, poor old Chapman! But he is really a good man, though he is a fool. If she was his wife, she'd be a good wife."

"She can't be poor, for she's true and sweet when she sings," said Dorothy, smiling. "I like her."

"I like her, too," said Ruth, crushing her hand. "I like her, too."

"She's a good girl, Mr. Jack," said Freda, smiling back at the boy at the sound of her own name.

"I like her, too," said Dorothy, smiling.

"Girl!" raising her voice, "what do you say to having a spread in the big room off the chapel on Monday night? Mr. Navarro and I," with a roguish glance at Jack, "have been planning it, and all who agree with me make it manifest by saying aye!"

Everybody responded promptly, and it was agreed that they hold a grand banquet in the vacant room at midnight. The company was to consist of the jolly quartette and their four admirers.

"We want to make it a grand success," Freda said, a moment later, "because," with a queer little break in her voice while her bright eyes grew dim, "it is not at all likely that we eight will ever be together again at once, and we want to remember this. Win and I graduate, so we will never come back, unlike the cat in the song."

Jack's eyes were a trifle dim, too, as he again leaned down to speak to her, but the words were never uttered, for an exclamation from Dick Burnett that in another hour it would be daylight, caused them some uneasiness. The hours had slipped by ere they realized it, and in a few moments more they were standing upon the shore bidding each other good-bye, promising to meet again on Monday night. A rosy flush dyed Freda's soft cheek as her hand lay for an instant in that strong, warm one that had the power to send the blood bounding in torrents through her veins, and she raised her eyes timidly to the dark, handsome face alight with tenderness. And then, as if ashamed of the new, sweet bliss that thrilled her, she quickly withdrew the rose-tipped fingers, and ran like a graceful fawn over the dew-kissed grass, a saucy laugh rippling from her ripe, red lips.

"Monday night without fail," the jolly quartette called back to the young men. "We will meet you under the old apple tree and conduct you to the banquet hall, where a feast fit for the gods will await you. Until then—farewell!"

CHAPTER VI

THE SWEETEST SOUND ON EARTH.

They were scrambling over the orchard wall, when Freda suddenly halted, a little cry of dismay bursting from her lips.

"Girls, girls, we have entirely forgotten old Coffin's wig and false teeth! They are in the woodpecker's hole, unless Mrs. Woodpecker has pulled the poor old girl's head-gear apart to make a carpet for her house. If madam finds her without them, she will know who took them, and thus ends our good times."

Her fears were groundless, however, for aside from being a trifle mussed, Miss Coffeen's cherished tresses were uninjured, and stuffing them in her pocket, together with the set of shining teeth, she climbed down from the tree, and they crept quietly up to their rooms.

Daylight was breaking, and as Winona saw the gray dawn struggling through the bank of rose-hued clouds in the East, she threw herself down upon the bed, saying, with a yawn:

(To be continued)

On the Wheel for a Fortune

The Wonderful Adventures of a Boy Bicyclist

By WILLIAM WADE.

(A Serial Story).

CHAPTER VI (continued.)

Sylvia could not sleep. Anon she heard him in his sleep as he cried for water; then he awoke, and found her crying softly.

The moonlight came, and the lost ones sat there conversing in low tones, each striving to sustain and comfort the other.

The light sufficed to enable them to see for some distance over the sandy plains. Suddenly Horace pointed to the East, saying with new animation:

"Surely there are some objects moving yonder—afar."

Sylvia looked and cried out:

"Can it be our pursuers?"

Horace sprang to his feet and looked intently. The objects he had seen grew and developed to his view as they came nearer. There seemed to be a long line of moving figures.

It was not many moments before he made out that they were horsemen, and then as he saw their feathered head-dresses he shuddered. Instantly he cried:

"They are Indians—Apaches, the most bloodthirsty tribe of the far southwest!"

A deadly fear seized upon Sylvia. She grasped his arm.

"Do not let me fall into their inhuman clutches alive?" she implored.

"They are coming straight toward us. They have sighted us. They are coming faster. The wheel! Again we must ride for our lives," he said.

They mounted the safety. Horace held the treasure bag. Sylvia clung to him. The road was rocky, and they raced, but it was hard wheeling on the yielding sand. Horace thought of the treasure only to reflect that all the wealth he carried could not purchase safety.

Yet it was to him a sacred trust, no sooner to be given up to the foe, than the dear one to whom it belonged.

The Indians gained rapidly. They numbered a score.

Soon they circled around the young cyclist, and closed in about him, pulling and yelling. He knew that successful resistance was out of the question. The riders of the Apaches covered him. The tall, hideously-painted chief called out to him in broken English:

"White boy surrender, else shoot, heap quick!"

Horace had drawn his revolver, and held it, but the hopelessness of the situation caused him to lower it. A moment later and Sylvia was prostrate in the hands of the savages.

While they were closely guarded, the Apaches held a brief consultation.

Then the chief announced that Horace was doomed to death, and added: "White girl go with big chief, be wife?"

The Indians were presently dragging the lad away toward a great rock, when Sylvia sprang after them with a cry for mercy for him.

But the tall chief seized her.

She strove frantically to free herself. In the struggle a strange-looking medal, made of copper, which she wore suspended about her neck, under her dress, came in sight. The chief saw it, and then something astonishing, as it was unexpected, immediately transpired.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GIFT OF THE WHITE MEDICINE WOMAN SAVES THE PRISONERS.

When the Apache chief saw the strange looking copper medal which came in sight suspended about Sylvia's neck during her struggles to free herself from him as she sought to reach Horace, whom the Indians were leading away to meet his death, the savage leaders suddenly released her and stared with surprise and awe at the white girl.

She understood that she owed her release to the influence of the medal, and a thrilling hope began to dawn in her heart as it flashed upon her memory how the unique copper talisman, for such it was, had come to her.

"Where white girl get the great sacred totem of the Apaches?" demanded the chief, pointing at the copper medal.

"The white medicine woman, old Hester, gave it to me, and she is my foster mother. She said she had it from a great chief whom she cured when he was ill unto death, and who said it would bring safety to the wearer among all his tribe," answered Sylvia, truthfully.

The chief seemed to regard the white girl with new interest and respect.

But she was thinking only of saving Horace. Would the mysterious power of the strange totem avail with those superstitious but savage men?

"As the wearer of the totem, as the daughter of the white medicine woman, I call upon you to release the young white man—to spare his life!" she went on, assuming an air of authority, though her heart was quaking.

The chief seemed to hesitate.

Sylvia held the totem on high, and cried aloud:

"The great spirit sees you! Will you refuse to obey the will of the bearer of the sacred totem?"

Meanwhile the Indians who were hurrying Horace away to his doom had paused, and turned to see the totem, and they had heard and witnessed the dramatic scene.

Several spoke in the Apache tongue, as they heard the white girl's last words. Then the chief said:

"The white medicine woman saved the life of Red Hand, and he—myself—gave her the great totem. Red Hand does not speak with a crooked tongue, like the pale faces, and he dare not disobey the wearer of the totem. The white boy must not be harmed."

Upon hearing that Sylvia suddenly turned faint so great was the revulsion of feeling which she experienced.

For a moment she saw nothing, knew nothing. Then she saw Horace at her side, free, unharmed.

As for the young wheelman he felt as if a miracle had been wrought in his behalf, and that Sylvia was the good angel who had performed it.

(To be Continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

The kick on the ankle received in a baseball game more than a month ago resulted in the death of Joseph Ladd, No. 292 East Thirty-fourth street, New York. The boy was playing in a lot when he received the blow. It did not appear serious, but erysipelas developed. He died in the Kings County Hospital.

Eggs are three cents a dozen, twelve for three cents, in far-off, famine-plagued China. This startling market news reached the War Department recently and was promptly announced an added reason for recognition of the republic. Major General Wood, Chief of Staff, believes that hats could come off to any country which can produce eggs at one-quarter of a cent each.

A. C. Sibley, of Franklin, Pa., friend of John D. Archbold when the Standard Oil Company wanted to see him on important matters of state, has inserted an ad in the newspapers that every Wednesday and Friday he will send in from his farm 200 cabbages as long as supply lasts. The first batch arrived April 12, and choice heads were quickly taken by those who still trust in him.

Men at the Lackawanna Coal Company's plant at Montrose, Pa., are interested in Cæsar Zelaya, of San Chile, the millionaire graduate of Columbia University, who is working as a surveyor at the mines for \$15 a week. Zelaya is wealthy enough in his own name to buy the entire holdings of the Lackawanna company, but the young Chilean toils as diligently as any other man. He wants the experience he needs to enable him to handle the mining properties he owns in Chile. He expects to remain here at least two years.

The Civic League of Hagerstown, Md., obtained school board permission to park the grounds around the Winter street public school, Albert C. Parker, the principal, became much interested. In front of the building were several lots of stones, which he removed, but the appropriation was small. The boys, the students of the school and till the eight hours of the day, to try their marksmanship. The stones were used, and the stones were removed quickly and without cost.

United States Ambassador H. V. Morgan, at Rio de Janeiro, has notified the State Department that the Brazilian government has failed to renew the agreement under which American property and account has been accepted by the government of Brazil to the amount of one-half percent of the value of the merchandise imported. He attributes the failure to the fact that a committee that is now in the United States and has come over to Brazil to treat the subject of the new American Consulate at Rio de Janeiro, and to the fact that the American Ambassador at the General Assembly.

An old Spanish ecclesiastical document in the possession of the University of California has just yielded a new story of the founding of San Francisco, which places the date on March 27, 1776, before the birth of the nation. The document is in the Robert E. Gowan collection, presented by the late Collis P. Huntington, and it tells of the journey from Sonora, Mexico, of Padre Pedro Font, who founded a mission at Yuma, Arizona, then crossed to San Diego and moved up the coast to San Francisco. There, "on the extremity of the white cliff at the inner point of the entrance to the harbor" the cross was planted and a settlement established.

Governor Sulzer on April 12 signed the Civil Rights bill introduced by Assemblyman Levy, of New York. The Governor declared it "the most advanced law on this subject which can be found on the statute books of any State in the nation." It contains a provision against discrimination on account of race or creed in places of public accommodation or amusement and makes violation subject to a fine of \$100 to \$500, to be recovered by the person aggrieved. A place of public accommodation, resort or amusement within the meaning of the law is deemed to include any inn, tavern, hotel, restaurant, eating house, public conveyance, bath-house, barber shop, theatre and music hall.

An English paper gives an interesting account of the telephone service that was provided to connect five stations of the British Antarctic Expedition, that is, the living quarters with the four instrument and observing stations. In order to save weight, a matter of such prime importance in the transportation of supplies by polar explorers, the line wire employed was bare, hard drawn aluminium. About 75 miles of this wire was carried and the lines connecting the stations were metallic circuits of this bare wire laid about six feet apart on the dry snow, which, as is well known, is an excellent insulator. The low temperature precluded the employment of individual batteries at the stations, and a 24-volt "common battery" was used.

One boy, endowed with abnormal power to dream, has come to a single idea until from the study of which he has devised an instrument of one string made of a cigar box, which produces all the musical strains from the mournful twang of a jew's harp to the swelling note of the six-stringed fiddle. Charles Sticker, the son of a cloak dealer and a pupil of Public School 34, at Broome and Willist streets, New York, is the young man who has mastered the intricacies of a cigar box so as to bring forth music that touches the soul—but that is not all. He has organized a band made up of fourteen-year-old boys, and his "one-stringed cigar box violin band" has become so proficient that it will give a public concert, at which all the music will be from cigar box guitars. Young Sticker can play on a single stringed instrument as well as on the four strings of a regular violin.

NEWS PARAGRAPHS

Physicians in Spain have been conducting experiments to determine the relative value of wines as tonics. For centuries the juice of the grape, properly treated and converted into wines, was considered the greatest strength-giver to a weakened constitution, but recent tests have shown strawberry wine to be better. In some localities in Spain great quantities of strawberries are being grown for wine alone.

Fifty members of the Columbia Park Boys' Club of San Francisco who are working their way around the world under the personal direction of J. S. Peixotto, a cousin of the Equitable Life's Paris manager, arrived at Paris on April 19 and are visiting newspaper offices. They will remain two months, giving street concerts, dancing and acting in plays. Already they are popular along the boulevards. The next country they will visit will be Italy, after which they will go to Australia, China and Japan, expecting to arrive in San Francisco next March.

It is believed that the Eskimo lamp was invented before its possessors emigrated from their original home, which was probably farther south and near the sea coast. But the form of the lamp becomes more specialized the higher the latitude is. The lamps of southern Alaska have a wick edge of two inches, while those of Point Barrow and northern Greenland have wick edges of seventeen to thirty-six inches. The lamp is employed for melting snow and ice to obtain drinking water, for cooking, lighting, warming, drying skins and in the arts. It is also a social factor and the sign of the family unit, each head of the family having his lamp.

Although the history of the *peacock* is not so well known as that of the *peacock*, it was introduced into England about 1790, vanishing nearly a score of years later. It was in vogue for more than half a century for its vogue. On its first appearance in London, dated by some authorities January 15, 1797, curiosity ran and crowded to such lengths that it was a "frightful sight" in the English and American papers. It was received with a thunder and, while the wearer met with the common fate of those who bring anything new on humanity, being ignominiously haled over by the Lord Mayor on a charge of breach of the peace. The silk *peacock* was soon perfected in the silk *peacock* in the *peacock* silk.

It is only during a comparatively short time that the Japanese have known glass as Occidentals know it. When the first railroads were built, passengers in the coaches often put their heads through the glass, supposing the frames of the windows to be empty, and the railroad company at length pasted pictures on the glass to call attention to the fact that a solid substance was behind them. The masses of the Japanese to-day do not know the mirror as it is known in the west. The richer people have one mirror, indeed, but usually the glass used in the mirrors sold to the populace is not quicksilvered, being merely well polished. As for cut glass, it is practically unknown in the island, and glass drinking-cups are rare.

Announcement is expected from officers of the International Harvester Company that its twine plant at Auburn, N. Y., will be dismantled and the machinery removed to Germany. Intimation of this action came tonight after a committee representing the striking twine mill employes had refused to comply with an ultimatum that the strikers return to work immediately or the mills would be removed. It became known that all men employed in the mills and most of the office force had been discharged and preparations made for removal of the machinery. State mediators report progress at the mills of the Columbian Rope Company. A tentative settlement has been reached on recognition of the union, reinstatement of the union officers, abolition of piece work and increases from 10 to 15 per cent. in wages. A joint committee will meet to try to adjust all other demands.

The controversy between "Ty" Cobb and the Detroit American League baseball club management over the signing of Cobb's contract for this season may result in an investigation by Congress to ascertain whether the system of players' contracts of the baseball league violates the Sherman anti-trust law or the law against peonage. Representative Hardwick of Georgia, representing in Congress the district in which Cobb is located, has introduced a resolution for such an investigation and would introduce it in the House shortly. Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia, who declares "Ty" Cobb is one of the South's most prominent citizens, telegraphed to Cobb in Georgia asking him to forward to Washington a copy of his contract and information regarding the conditions under which the players sign. The Senator said he wished to form an opinion as to the validity of the contract and to ascertain whether it was true that players are forced to accept the salaries and terms or be forever barred from playing. "What I understand exists cannot exist legally," said Smith. Representative C. C. Moore of Illinois in May introduced a bill in the House of Representatives called for an investigation of the baseball players' contract committee. It was referred to the rules committee, but no further action taken. It is understood Representative C. C. Moore intended to reintroduce the bill at the present session.

TIMELY TOPICS

“TRAVELLING” STONES.

“Traveling stones,” from the size of a pea to six inches in diameter, are found in Nevada. When distributed on a floor or other level surface, within two or three feet of one another, they immediately begin to travel toward a common center, and there lie huddled like a clutch of eggs in a nest. A single stone removed to a distance of three and a half feet, upon being released, at once started with wonderful and somewhat comical celerity to join its fellows. These queer stones are found in a region that is comparatively level and little more than bare rock. Scattered over this barren region are little basins, from a few feet to a rod or two in diameter, and it is in the bottom of these that the rolling stones are found. The cause for the strange conduct of these stones is doubtless to be found in the material of which they are composed, which appears to be lodestone or magnetic iron ore.

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE MAKES NEW RULES.

The Secretary of Commerce paid his first visit to the Bureau of Standards of his department on March 11, ruling lately. As he alighted from his automobile he was recognized by S. S. Voorhees, the engineer chemist of the institution, who sought Dr. S. W. Stratton, the director of the bureau, only to find that that official had not yet arrived. Neither did Edward B. Rosa, the physicist of the bureau, nor W. F. Hildebrand, the chemist. It was embarrassing for Mr. Voorhees, but he conducted the Secretary over the Bureau, and before the visit was completed Dr. Stratton arrived. When Mr. Redfield returned to his office he issued an order that every one connected with the Bureau of Standards, including the director, should hand in a time card each day showing the hours of arrival and departure, with a memorandum explaining failure to reach the Bureau at the regular hour and the cause of any absence during the official day.

SCOFFS AT SNAKE BITES.

A. Radclyffe Dugmore, who has a large experience with wild life in Africa, Canada, Newfoundland, Florida, and elsewhere, scoffs at the idea of danger from snake bites. “Sakes! How many authentic cases of deaths from snake bites do we hear of?” he asks. “As compared with the deaths from trolley cars or from fire they are as one is to a million, yet people walk boldly in front of a trolley and light fires daily with no idea of the awful risk they may surely be running. But to camp in Florida, the land of snakes, No! never. I have spent many months camping in this terribly dangerous country, sometimes with all my possessions without a tent, sleeping in all sorts of places, shooting in swamps and in the pine lands, and two native snakes only have I seen (both inside a city limit).” No doubt a majority of the 1,600 species of snake are harmless, yet Sir J. Fryer has demonstrated that in India alone 1,000 persons are killed annually by venomous snakes.

A SINGULAR AND SAD ACCIDENT.

Eighteen men were drowned as the result of the capsizing on April 7 of the German bark Mimi, which had just been hauled off the beach at North Spit, Nehalem Bay, Oregon, where she had been since February 13, when she went ashore. After futile efforts for nearly twenty-four hours against a heavy wind and the sea the life-saving crew from Garibaldi Station succeeded at 5 o’clock in the morning in saving Captain Charles Fisher of Portland, President of the Fisher Engineering Corporation; Captain J. Westphal, master of the Mimi, and two sailors. Captain Westphal attributed the disaster to a mistake on the part of the man in charge of a donkey engine on shore, which was being used in the effort to float the vessel. This engine, he said, gave a sudden pull on the cable, throwing the Mimi broadside to the sea, and the ship was overturned by a wave before those on board had a chance to save themselves. The survivors say that only seven men were left on board the Mimi after she turned turtle. No bodies have been recovered.

SAVED FROM SHARKS.

How seven sailors, who had been without food and water for three days on a sinking barkentine, were rescued just as they were about to fall prey to a school of sharks, was told by Captain Blackadder, of the steamship Manzanillo, which arrived recently from Havana. On March 17, on the way to Havana, the Manzanillo ran into the end of a hurricane. In the distance what looked like a derelict was sighted. Through a glass, however, the figures of seven men were made out. Captain Blackadder headed for the wreck. It was still so rough when the Manzanillo got within hailing distance that it seemed impossible to lower a lifeboat. “Jump overboard and we will save you!” shouted Captain Blackadder. The men pointed to the water. For the first time those on the Manzanillo saw the great school of man-eating sharks following the wreck. Two attempts were made to get a lifeboat out, but the sea was too rough. The wreck was sinking. Three hours after the Manzanillo had first sighted it its decks were nearly under water. The sharks, growing bolder, began leaping toward the men lashed to the mast stubs. Captain Blackadder realized that the wreck would go down in a few minutes, and called for volunteers to man a lifeboat. Five men responded, and after a hard fight, reached the wreck and took the seven survivors aboard. Five minutes later the wreck sank. One man was found with the shattered bone of his left leg sticking through the flesh. He had fallen from the topsail yard just before the hurricane carried away the masts. The rescued men were from the barkentine Mary D. Hume, which sailed from Pensacola with 18 men on board. They had been drifting helplessly for three days after the vessel sprung a leak and had lost the masts to the bottom. The last night after the Mary D. Hume began to fill with water. Four of the crew had crawled into a cockpit in Havana, where one of them had slept to die.

INTERESTING NEWS ITEMS

THE "NEWPORT'S" SUMMER CRUISE.

The summer cruise of the good ship *Newport*, known as the New York Nautical School, was assured recently, when the Board of Education appropriated the sum of \$21,070 for the expenses incidental to the voyage. It is the fortieth year of the school, which it is proposed to abolish. The city has been paying about \$50,000 a year to support the school, or a total of \$1,050,000 to graduate 769 boys, of whom only 134 have followed the sea. President Churchill said yesterday that it was too much money to pay for a "jaunt" and the Legislature could not abolish the school none too soon to suit him.

AN ADIRONDACK CLUBHOUSE BURNED.

The Adirondack League clubhouse, at Little Moose Lake, New York, was burned on April 15. The boathouse, containing about 150 canoes, was saved, as were the nearby camps. The property is that of the Adirondack League Club of New York City, which has about 1,000 members. The property is valued at \$15,000 and \$5,000. The cause of the fire is unknown. It started in the east wing of the building, which was unoccupied, and it was necessary to break in the doors to fight the flames. The blaze was discovered by the caretaker, Mrs. Peter Zimmer, who notified the Old Forge Fire Department. About sixty men went to the head of First Lake by motor boats and automobiles and carried a bucket brigade of men through the woods to the clubhouse. A bucket brigade was formed. While it prevented the destruction of nearby property, the

AN AVIATOR KILLED.

John W. Brodie, a professional aviator, was killed at Chicago, April 10, by a fall of his machine from a height of 100 feet at the aviation grounds on the West Side. Brodie was head of a school of aviation and was testing a new model. He was flying the machine over some trees when a branch snapped a guide wire, preventing control of aeroplane. The aviator was caught under the engine.

CLAY AND CLAY-ROCKS.

It may be that in time all such telegraph and telephone poles throughout the world will be made of glass because there are so many advantages in them. In the first place, they will last practically for all time, except in cases of unusual accident, where they may be broken, as in railroad wrecks. They will last even longer than iron or steel, as weather has practically no effect upon them, nor can insects get into them and destroy them. And in these days, when wood is becoming more and more valuable, it will be quite a saving of the precious wood to make such things of glass. Experiments are also under way for the manufacture of railroad ties of glass, in which wire netting is imbedded in the glass. Paving blocks are made of glass and have proved to be a most valuable material for street surfaces, being fitted together in such a manner as to be watertight, no water running down between the blocks. There are, in Lyons, France, a number of streets paved with glass, and they have a better resistance than stone, and also are not such great conductors of heat as stone. These glass paving blocks are now said to be actually cheaper than the granite blocks.

TREASURE OF THE INCAS TO BE EXPLORED.

W. C. Gates, an explorer of New York City, accompanied by three gold experts, sailed the other day on board the United Fruit Steamship Carrillo for Callao, Peru, whence they will make their way up into the Andes around the shores of Lake Titicaca in a quest for the buried treasure of the Incas.

The present expedition comes as a result of discoveries made by Mr. Gates on a recent prospecting trip in Peru, when he found a number of gold ornaments not far from Tiahuanaco, the old capital city of the Incas.

Struck by the remarkable designs of the ornaments and convinced of their antiquity, he took them to the authorities, who pronounced them genuine relics of the early art of the Aymara clan, the direct predecessors of the Incas.

As a result of this opinion, the four men sailed to complete the exploration. They expect to be gone more than a year, and upon their return a \$20,000,000 corporation will be floated to purchase land in Peru, after the necessary permits have been obtained from the Peruvian Government.

When asked for details of the expedition, Mr. Gates denied it was for the purpose of discovering the treasure of the Incas, and said he and his companions were bound merely upon a prospecting trip for iron ore.

The treasure of the Incas, which was hidden after the invasion of the country by the Spaniards under Francisco Pizarro, is still to be found.

THE SURPRISE FOUNTAIN PEN

A novelty of the greatest merit! It looks just like a genuine fountain pen. But it isn't. That's where the joke comes in. If you take off the cover, a nice, ripe, juicy lemon appears. Then you give the friend to lend it to the merry "ha-ha." You might call it an everlasting joke because you can use it over and over again. Price, by mail, postpaid, 10c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

IMITATION CUT FINGER.

A cardboard finger, carefully bandaged with linen, and the side and end are blood-stained. When you slip it on your finger and show it to your friends, just give a groan or two, nose it up, and pull a look of pain. You will get nothing but sympathy until you give them the laugh. Then duck! Price, 10c., postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE LITTLE GEM TELEPHONE.

The transmitter in this telephone is made from the best imported parchment: with ordinary use will last a long time; can be made in any length by adding cord; the only real telephone for the

money; each one put up in a neat box; fully illustrated, with full directions how to use them. Price, 12c., postpaid.

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THE TOM-TOM DRUM.

Hold the drum in one hand and with the thumb of the other resting against the side of the drum manipulate the drumstick with the fingers of the same hand (as indicated in the cut). With practice it is possible to attain as great skill as with a real drum. The movable sounding board can be adjusted for either heavy or light playing. They are used extensively in schools for marching.

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With this trick you borrow a hat, and apparently shove a card up through the crown, without injuring the card or hat. The operation can be reversed, the performer seemingly pushing the card down through the crown into the hat again. It is a trick which will puzzle and interest the closest observer and detection is almost impossible. It is so simple that a child can learn how to perform it in a few minutes.

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This little article should be in the pocket of every smoker. With it a perfect cigarette can be made in ten seconds. You will find them equal in size to a real cigarette in quality to a hundred cigarettes at less than a quarter of the cost. With our cigarette maker in your possession, you can smoke a pipe or cigarette at pleasure, as it's just as easy to roll a cigarette as to fill a pipe. Every part of the cigarette maker is handsomely gold-plated. Price, 15c., or 3 for 40c. by mail, postpaid.

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The Remington-UMC .22 Repeater is rifled, sighted and tested for accuracy by expert gunsmiths. It shoots as you hold. The simple, improved safety device on every Remington-UMC .22 repeater never fails to work. Accidental discharge is impossible.

The Remington-UMC .22 Repeater is easily cared for. In taking down, your fingers are your only tools. The breech block, firing pin and extractor, come out in one piece—permitting the barrel to be cleaned from the breech.

The action handles .22 short, .22 long or .22 long rifle cartridges—any or all at the same time without adjustment.

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THE SPOTTER.

ON THE SPOT.—A fine trick. The performer exhibits a box. The Ace of Spades and five cards are now taken from it. The Ace of Spades is then completely covered with the other cards, which are then placed face down on the table. The performer then takes the top card and places it as if it were the bottom card. The spectators are then asked to take the top card and place it on the bottom card, and again the top card is taken, and again the top card is seen to be the bottom card. The card is turned over and found to be the bottom card. Price, 15c. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

ITCH POWDER.

Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, lay it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It

will make him scratch, roar, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 10 cents in box, by mail, postpaid.

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of the building, which is the boathouse, were the nearby lirondack League 1,000 members. These glass paving and \$75,000. The in the east wing

SPRINT SLATE-WRITING.—No trick has ever puzzled the scientists more and created a greater sensation than the famous spirit-writings which appear between sealed slates.

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Price, 15c. M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

THE PRINCE OF ALL CARD TRICKS.

Four cards are held in the form of a fan, and a spectator is asked to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now taken away and placed in his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

JUMPING CARD.—A pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

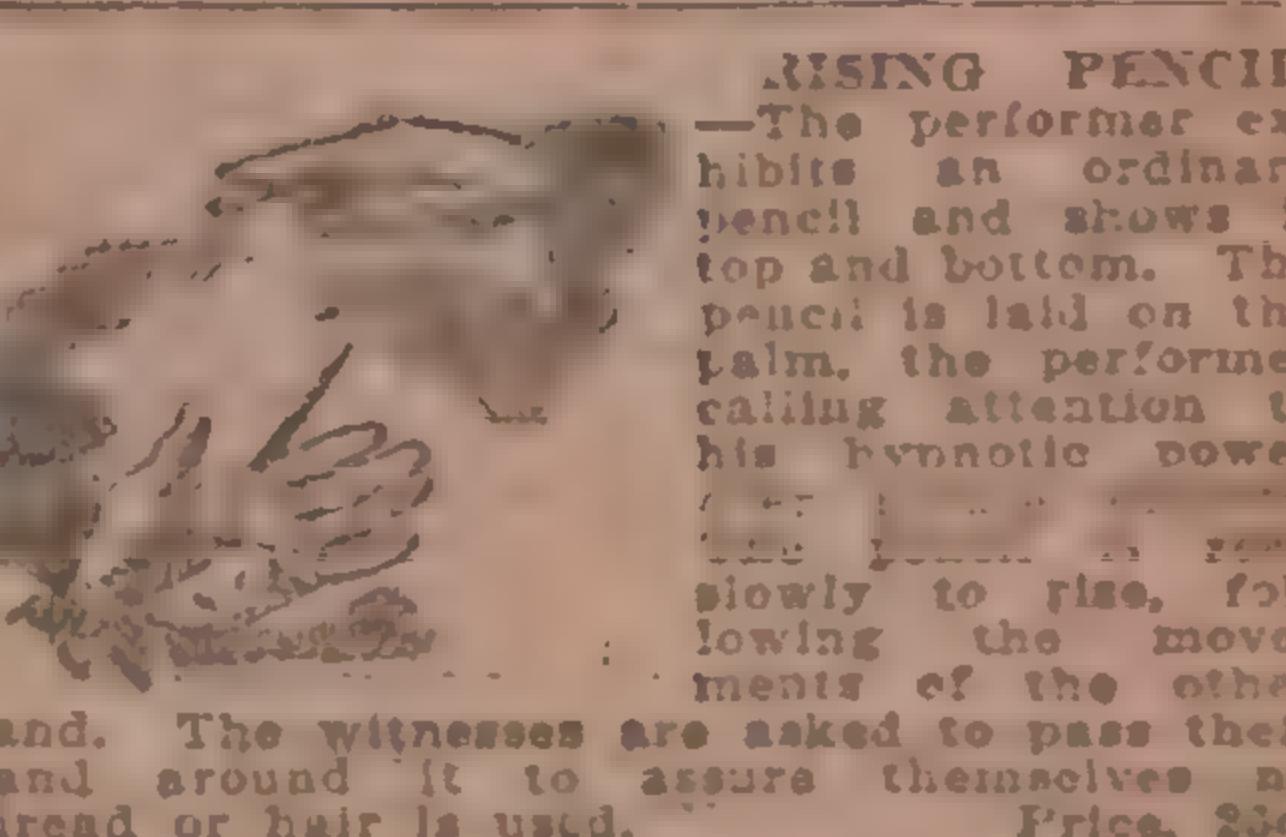


THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes first the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great climax; highly recommended. Price, 10c. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



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RISING PENCIL.—The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows its top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power

Price, 25c. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used.

Price, 25c. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card.

Price, 10c. M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE MULTIPLYING CORKS.—A small box is shown, to be empty, and one of the spectators is allowed to place three corks in it. The cover is put on and the box is handed to one of the spectators, who, upon opening the cover, finds three corks. Three of the corks are now made to vanish as mysteriously as they came. Very unusual. Price, 15c. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, MAY 14, 1913.

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ITEMS OF CURRENT NEWS

Some curious photographs, recently exhibited at the Academy of Sciences in Paris, show the effects of exploding moss into a block of polished steel. The effect upon the steel surface is similar to the lines of very fine engraving, the moss being embedded in the track it took and leaving the most intricate tracery.

George Mitchell, a full-blooded Shinnecock Indian, died at Hempstead, L. I., April 8, at the age of ninety. Mitchell left his tribe in Suffolk County when he was a young man and had lived near Hempstead since. Nearly all other Shinnecocks who have lived in Nassau County have died of tuberculosis. Mitchell died of old age.

A new American intercollegiate record for the 16-pound hammer throw was set at Berkeley, Cal., on April 19, in the twentieth annual track and field meet of the University of California and Stanford University. Karl Shattuck, of California, hurled the hammer 175 feet 10 inches, the previous record, made by Talbot, of Pennsylvania, being 173 feet 6 inches.

Five hundred dollars reward is offered for information that will lead to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who mutilated nine monuments on Gettysburg Battlefield, about March 4, 1913. Anyone who can furnish information or may have suspicion of a person or persons who, in his opinion, committed the damage, is invited to address a letter to Post Office Box 329, Gettysburg, Pa. Any information anyone may give will be treated as strictly confidential and he will be reimbursed for any liability on account of such information.

The net earnings of corporations of the United States for the calendar year 1912 were \$3,000,000,000, an increase of \$250,000,000 over 1911. This amount will yield an income to the Federal Government under the corporation tax law of \$30,000,000, which is \$2,500,000, or 8 per cent. greater than a year ago. Royal E. Cabell, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, has just received returns from practically all corporations, and to-day completed assessments to the full extent of the \$30,000,000, which must be paid to the Government by June 30.

The discovery of a ruby weighing almost half a carat in a hen's egg, at Hammonton, N. J., started a hunt far and near for the ground upon which the hens of that particular flock have been grazing. The gem was found by J. H. Randlett when the lad opened a boiled egg into a cup. He took the object to his father, who found it to be a genuine ruby and which a jeweller declared to be of considerable value. How or where the hen picked up the stone is a problem for Randlett, but some of his friends have begun a search of the ground where his chickens have been roaming.

Macon County, Ala., is said to have a larger area of land held by negroes than any other county in the South. In 1910 negroes owned 61,689 acres in Macon. In Liberty County, Ga., the next largest in negro land holdings, the area was 55,048, while in Louisa County, Va., the third county in this respect, the colored population owned 53,268 acres. In Macon County there is no race problem—the negro population, through the industrial education of Tuskegee, has become self-reliant. The county has fifty-seven colored public schools.

Indigent widows in New Jersey will be assisted in holding their families together by financial aid from the State under the terms of the "Mothers' Pension" bill, which received the approval of Gov. Fielder on April 9. The new law provides that widows with children under sixteen years of age shall be paid from the county treasuries a pension of \$9 a month for the first child; \$5 for the second, and \$4 per month for each additional child. Application for the granting of these pensions are to be made through the State Board of Children's Guardians and are to be passed upon by the common pleas judge in the different counties.

A minimum wage of \$9 a week for all women and girls employed in work which goes into interstate commerce and a prohibition against the employment of girls under fifteen years of age are provided for in a bill introduced recently by Senator Chilton. The minimum wage would apply to all women employed in transportation, telegraph and similar interstate service and in manufacturing establishments the products of which are shipped in interstate commerce. The Illinois vice commission recently recommended to President Wilson the adoption of a federal law to increase the minimum wages of women workers.

J. Vipont Davies, a consulting engineer recently employed by the New Jersey Bridge Commission, before the Central Mercantile Association at the Salmagundi Club, No. 14 West Twelfth Street, New York, strongly opposed the project to build a bridge across the Hudson River. "The lowest estimates," he said, "of the cost of a simple highway bridge with no railroad facilities vary from forty-two to fifty million dollars, and with railroad facilities the cost may easily reach a hundred million. For this money you could construct no less than five pairs of tunnels. They would be far more convenient for traffic than a single bridge." A pair of freight tunnels from Varick and Canal Streets, Manhattan, to Provost Street, Jersey City, Mr. Davies said, was the ideal location at present.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

A VALUABLE PHILATELIC LIBRARY.

The Philatelic Library of the late Lord Crawford the most comprehensive collection of books and pamphlets on postage-stamp collecting that has ever been brought together, or is ever likely to be, has become, by his bequest, the property of the British nation, and will doubtless be placed in the British Museum. Mr. Bacon's catalogue of it, recently published, is a large quarto volume of over 450 double-column pages, and its compilation extended over several years.

CARRIED A BULLET FOR FIFTY YEARS.

Major George Cooper, who fought through the Civil War on the Confederate side, left his home at No. 241 Nineteenth Street, West New York, recently, and went to North Hudson Hospital, where he complained of an abscess in the calf of his right leg. Doctors opened the abscess and out dropped a bullet. "Well, old fellow, I have been carrying you with me for fifty years, since I was shot down at the battle of Pea Ridge," the astonished major said. Major Cooper was born in Virginia seventy-six years ago. After the Civil War he joined the armies of Germany, Russia and France. He is unmarried. "I'm just a soldier of fortune," he remarked, as he left the hospital.

THE PYRAMIDS BUILT FOR ASTROLOGERS.

"The famous pyramids of Egypt were undoubtedly built as platforms for the renowned astrologers of the East, who came to Egypt to foretell the fortunes of King Cheops and his family," said Doctor Percival Lowell, director of the Lowell Observatory, at Flagstaff, Ariz., recently. "The great pyramid, particularly, must have been designed for a superb astronomical observatory. From it the astrologers studied the stars and the constellations, and foretold the events of the King's life. The other pyramids were built for his brothers, sons, and grandsons. From studies that scientists have made of the pyramids, we are able to say safely that the men who built them had a wonderful knowledge of astronomy. There is hardly any doubt that all the pyramids were built at the same time. The grading of the sizes, corresponding with the importance of the various members of the king's family, and the fact that none of the family robbed the pyramid of his relative, shows that this is true."

HOW PEOPLE SLEEP.

The American or the European in order to get a good night's rest ordinarily requires a soft pillow under his bed, but the Japanese stretches himself on a rush mat on the floor, puts a hard, square block of wood under his head, and does not sleep well if he does not have it. In China they make a great to do with reference to their beds. These are very low, scarcely rising from the floor, but are often carved exquisitely of wood. Like the Japanese the Chinese never makes his bed any softer than is possible by the use of rush mats. It is a curious fact with reference to the

sleeping habits of the various peoples that while those in northern countries do not appear to be able to sleep well unless they have lots of room in which to stretch their legs, the inhabitants of the tropics often curl themselves up like monkeys at the lower angle of a suspended hammock and sleep very soundly that way. The robust American will cover himself with a pair of blankets and throw his window open to the air even in the dead of winter, and sometimes he will not complain if there is a bit of snow on the window sill in the morning. But the Russian, on the contrary, likes no sleeping place so well as the top of the big soapstone stove in his dwelling. Crawling out of this blistering bed in the morning, he delights in taking a plunge in a cold stream, even if he has to break through the ice to do so. In Lapland the native crawls, head and all, into a bag made of reindeer skin and sleeps warm and comfortable within it. The East Indian, at the other end of the world, also has a sleeping bag, but it is more porous than the Laplander's. Its purpose is to keep out the mosquitoes rather than to keep its occupants warm. The American clings to his feather pillow, but he has long since discarded the old feather bed in favor of the hair or straw or felt mattress.

ELECTRICITY IN MODERN WARFARE.

The electric telegraph wires over the land, and the cables under the seas, and the wireless through the air, in times of war become of untold value in the quick transmission of despatches to and from the forces in the field. Distance is annihilated, important movements are executed with less delay, and war is itself shortened. In addition to these applications, electricity is now put to many other important uses in the conduct of war. Moreover, new applications are constantly being found for its varied capabilities. A modern mine field for coast or harbor defense is an electric adaptation akin to electric blasting, in which suitable fuses are arranged to be fired by a battery-current sent at will from some control station by the simple closing of the circuit. Heavy charges of high explosives, called mines, are so distributed and connected by cables to control stations that it is difficult to imagine a hostile ship or fleet traversing a well-organized mine field without destruction or most serious damage. Another terrible engine of destruction for use in the defense of harbors is the electrically controlled dirigible torpedo. Moving and steering itself in response to electric currents sent through a small wire or cable, it carries a charge of explosive sufficient to destroy in an instant the most formidable warship. Its high speed and its almost complete submergence save it from damage by the guns of the enemy, even if its approach is discovered. The dirigible torpedo may be regarded as an explosive mine, moved, directed, and fired by the agency of electricity. The effectiveness of some of the more recently developed electrical devices has not yet been tested in actual warfare, but it is safe to say that their use will hasten the day when war will prove to be so destructive and so terrible as to be avoided, if possible, by all civilized nations.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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